

**BEFORE THE
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
OF THE
STATE OF INDIANA**

IN THE MATTER OF:

THE AMENDMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE)	
RULES GOVERNING COMMERCIAL AND)	Administrative Cause
SPORT FISHING FOR CATFISH)	Number 14-142D
)	(LSA Document #14-510(F))
)	

**REPORT ON RULE PROCESSING, CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS,
ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION REGARDING FINAL ADOPTION**

1. RULE PROCESSING

The rule amendments proposed for consideration on final adoption impacts 312 IAC 9-7-3 governing the taking and possessing of catfish, generally, as well as 312 IAC 9-7-16 applicable to sport fishing on the Ohio River; 312 ICA 9-8-2 governing commercial fishing for catfish on inland waters; and, 312 IAC 9-8-6 governing commercial fishing on the Ohio River.

If granted final adoption the proposed rules will have the effect of prohibiting the take of any variety of catfish by sport anglers or through commercial fishing operations unless the catfish is at least thirteen inches long. Sport anglers and commercial fishing operations would further be restricted to taking one each per day of channel catfish measuring 28 inches or longer, blue catfish measuring 35 inches or longer, and flathead catfish measuring 35 inches or longer. The rule amendment proposal makes other necessary alterations to address format and technical realignments.

Executive Order 13-03 requires agencies to “suspend rulemaking action on any proposed rules for which a notice of intent to adopt a rule...was not submitted to the office of the *Indiana Register* on or before January 14, 2013.” Additional compliance provisions were included in Financial Management Circular 2013-01. Joseph Hoage (“*Hoage*”), General Counsel for the Department of Natural Resources (“*Department*”), submitted to Christopher D. Atkins (“*Atkins*”), the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (“*OMB*”), a request for an exception to the suspension of rulemaking action under the provisions of Executive Order 13-03.

In a letter dated June 27, 2014, Atkins responded, that the “request qualifies for an exception under Section 6(b) and (g) of Executive Order 13-03.” It was determined that the original request for an exception to the suspension of rulemaking failed to identify the amendments sought with respect to 312 IAC 9-8-2. Subsequent communication between Hoage and David Johnson, Executive Director of the Office of State-Based Initiatives and OMB Regulatory Counsel, resulted in the December 30, 2014 confirmation that “OMB interprets the June approval to extend to the 312 IAC 9-8-2 catfish amendments...”

The Natural Resources Commission (“*Commission*”) granted preliminary adoption to the current rule proposals at its regular meeting held on November 18, 2014 following presentation by staff of the Department’s Division of Fish and Wildlife (“*DFW*”). The “Notice of Intent” to adopt the proposed rule amendments was posted to the *Indiana Register* database website as 20141224-IR-312140510NIA on December 24, 2014. The notice identified Linnea Petercheff, Staff Specialist with the DFW, as the “small business regulatory coordinator” for purposes of Indiana Code § 4-22-2-28.1.

The Commission caused the information required by I.C. 4-22-2-22.5 to be included within the rulemaking docket maintained on its Internet website. The rulemaking docket has been updated periodically throughout the rule adoption process.

Following the posting of the Notice of Intent, the fiscal analyses of the rule proposal were submitted, along with a copy of the proposed rule language and a copy of the posted Notice of Intent, to the OMB on January 7, 2015 as specified by Executive Order 2-89 and Financial Management Circular 2010-4. On the same date, the material was also submitted to George Angelone, Counsel for the Legislative Council. In a letter dated July 9, 2015, Brian E. Bailey, Director, OMB, recommended that the proposed rule amendments be approved.

The Commission’s Division of Hearings submitted the rule proposal to the Legislative Services Agency (“*LSA*”) along with the “Statement Concerning Rules Affecting Small Business” (also known as the “Economic Impact Statement”) on July 16, 2015. The Notice of Public Hearing was submitted to LSA on July 20, 2015. The Notice of Public Hearing was posted to the *Indiana*

Register database website on July 29, 2015 as 20150729-IR-312140510PHA along with the Economic Impact Statement (20150729-IR-312140510EIA) and the text of the proposed rule (20150729-IR-312140510PRA). Following receipt of an “Authorization to Proceed” from LSA on July 20, 2015, the Commission’s Division of Hearings also caused a Notice of Public Hearing to be published by the Indianapolis Newspapers, which publishes a newspaper of general circulation in Marion County, Indiana, on July 29, 2015. In addition, notice of the public hearing and a summary of the proposed rule changes were published on the Commission’s web-based electronic calendar.

As required by I.C. 4-22-2.1-5(c)(2), the proposed rule amendments and Economic Impact Statement were also submitted to the Office of Small Business and Entrepreneurship (“OSBE”) on July 20, 2015. In a letter dated July 21, 2015, Erik Scheub, Small Business Ombudsman, stated that “OSBE does not object to the economic impact to small business associated with the proposed rule.”

2. REPORT OF PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMENTS

a) Public Hearing Comments

One public hearing was conducted on August 24, 2015 at the Spring Mill Inn in the Spring Mill State Park in Mitchell, Indiana, as published. Approximately 42 members of the public attended. Sandra Jensen served as the hearing officer. Staff from the Department’s DFW and Division of Law Enforcement also attended.

A summary of the oral comments received at the public hearing has been attached and incorporated by reference at Exhibit A. One individual attending the public hearing also provided written comments, which have been reproduced, attached and incorporated as part of Exhibit B.

b) Comments Received Outside Public Hearing

An opportunity was provided for members of the public to submit written comments by regular U.S. mail or through the Commission’s rulemaking docket from December 2014 until the

comment period closed at midnight on August 24, 2015. These comments have been attached and incorporated by reference at Exhibit B.

c) Response by the Department of Natural Resources

On August 26, 2015, the Commission received the “Division of Fish and Wildlife Response” (*“DFW Response”*) to the public comments received. The DFW Response is attached and incorporated by reference at Exhibit C.

3. ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

Contemporaneous with LSA’s review of the proposed rule language to ensure consistency with the Administrative Rules Drafting Manual, the LSA also recommended a revision to language being added to each of the rules proposed for amendment. The suggested revision will stylistically align the newly added language with language already existing in the rule. The revision will not impact the intent or meaning of the rules. The revision recommended by LSA altering the language in 312 IAC 9-7-3(d), 312 IAC 9-7-16(i), 312 IAC 9-8-2(g) and 312 IAC 9-8-6(g) from:

- (1) channel catfish twenty-eight (28) inches in length or longer;**
- (2) blue catfish thirty-five (35) inches in length or longer; and**
- (3) flathead catfish thirty-five (35) inches in length or longer;**

so that the subsections would read as follows:

- (1) channel catfish that is at least twenty-eight (28) inches long;**
- (2) blue catfish that is at least thirty-five (35) inches long; and**
- (3) flathead catfish that is at least thirty-five (35) inches longer;**

The revisions suggested by LSA were considered and approved by the DFW and have been incorporated into the language of the rule set forth at Exhibit D, which is incorporated as if set forth herein.

Through study conducted by the DFW since 2009 and a creel survey conducted by the DFW in 2005 – 2006 it now cites a variety of factors associated with declining catfish harvests including increased sport fishing for consumptive and recreational purposes as well as increases in commercial harvests. The creel survey indicates that nearly 70% of catfish caught by sport

anglers on the lower portion of the Wabash River are harvested. Harvest reports submitted by commercial fishing license holders reflect “an increasing focus on larger, “trophy” catfish.” The DFW Response provides additional important detail into the research and anecdotal evidence relied upon in proposing this rule.

Comments were received from members of the public in opposition to the increase in length from 10 inches to 13 inches for channel catfish while the Indiana Wildlife Federation suggested that the increase to 13 inches is not sufficient and the Commission should consider future size increases to 15 inches.

The DFW relied upon the conclusion of Dr. Robert Columbo of Southern Illinois University who determined “that increasing the minimum size limits to 13 inches would lead to increased population abundance and higher angler catch rates and yield because it increases the reproductive potential of smaller/younger fish.” Dr. Columbo’s conclusion is consistent with the determinations of Steve Donabauer who noted in a 2009 report that “the current 10-inch minimum size limit allows harvest of immature fish and thus provides very limited protection for first time spawning catfish. Flathead catfish become sexually mature between 3-5 years and channel catfish at 4-5 years, yet flathead catfish are already nearly 12 inches long by age three and channel catfish are nearly 12 inches by age four. Therefore, thirteen (13) inches is the minimum size needed in order to help ensure self-sustaining catfish populations in Indiana’s rivers and streams.”

The rule, as proposed, also provides for daily bag limits on Channel Catfish at least 28 inches long and Blue and Flathead Catfish at least 35 inches long. This restriction has been supported almost universally by sport anglers and unanimously opposed by commercial fishing license holders.

The DFW responded to the public comments noting that these larger “trophy” catfish have higher reproductive potential and provide assistance in controlling populations of “forage species such as gizzard shad and Asian carp” by eating these smaller fish. Therefore, in addition to their ability to assist in stabilizing catfish populations, the DFW concludes that “maintaining strong

predator fish populations, such as large catfish” is beneficial to the control of invasive fish species.

The DFW surveyed the restrictions placed upon the harvest of catfish by neighboring states including Kentucky, Illinois and Ohio. The restrictions in place in the states neighboring Indiana are similar with respect to limiting the take of large catfish to one fish per day. The DFW accepts the accuracy of one citizen comment that the restrictions in Illinois presently applies only to sport anglers. However, the DFW indicates that the Illinois Department of Natural Resources is proposing the same restrictions be applied to commercial fishing. In Kentucky, the bag limits on large catfish apply to both sport and commercial fishing except that commercial fishermen who meet expressed criteria with respect to past harvests or who are drawn in a lottery will be allowed to take up to 4 large catfish per day from a limited stretch of the Ohio River. Ohio’s restrictions on large catfish are identical to the restrictions proposed here and in addition Ohio restricts the aggregate take of all species of catfish to five fish per day of any size.

Restrictions on catfish harvests from states more remotely located, including West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, Minnesota, Mississippi and Oklahoma, were also considered by the DFW. Again, in these states, the restrictions are somewhat varied but generally consistent with the proposal under consideration by the Commission here.

The hearing officer recommends that the proposed rule, as revised, which is set forth at Exhibit D, be granted final adoption.

Dated: August 27, 2015

Sandra L. Jensen
Hearing Officer

EXHIBIT A

PUBLIC HEARING COMMENT SUMMARIES

Chris Pelzel - Harrison, Ohio

Pelzel stated that he has been fishing mostly the Markland Pool on the Ohio River and has observed a decline in the number of trophy catfish. He offered support for the rule proposal for the protection of the catfish resource.

Ryan Moran – Franklin County, Indiana

Moran stated that he is a tournament fisherman and has fished the Ohio River from West Virginia to the Mississippi River but primarily fishes the Markland Pool on the Ohio River. Moran expressed support for the rule proposal.

Eric Radez – Marion County, Indiana

Radez explained that he has frequently and for many years fished the Ohio River adding that for the past 8 or 9 years it has been difficult to catch a decent number of trophy catfish. He indicated awareness of biological studies completed by officials in Kentucky and Ohio to support rules similar to, or even more stringent than, the rule proposal under consideration here. Radez observed that Indiana's research involving the Ohio River would reasonably yield the same conclusions as the conclusions reached in those states. Radez requested that Indiana recognize the problems and act accordingly to protect the catfish fishery.

Shane Coomes – Marion County, Indiana

Coomes stated that he fishes the entire state, including the Ohio River offering further that he has fished heavily for the past 10 years. With respect to catfish populations Coomes stated, "You can steadily see a decline everywhere you go." Coomes stated support for the rule proposal.

Jeff Horton – Vincennes, Indiana

Horton stated that he is the owner of Horton's Fish Market, the operation of which provides his sole livelihood. He stated that he fishes the Wabash River. He stated the opinion that the proposed rule will hurt commercial fishing thereby taking revenue from commercial fishermen for the benefit of sport fishermen. Horton added that a study of the Wabash River conducted by Eastern Illinois University (EIU) from 2009 through 2014 revealed an increase in Channel Catfish and Flathead Catfish populations with insufficient data to make a conclusion with respect to Blue Catfish. Horton recalled that a proposal similar to the present proposal failed in 2011 based, in part, on the conclusions in the EIU thesis. Horton noted that he has seen no actual data indicating that the catfish populations on the Wabash River, where he fishes, are depleting. He requested that he be provided access to such data and was referred to Division of Fish and Wildlife staff present at the public hearing. Horton offered once again that he is "totally against" the rule proposal.

Horton also clarified that the State of Illinois adopted a regulation that requires sport fishermen to comply with size and bag limits similar to those provided in this proposed rule but the Illinois regulation exempts commercial fishing from those restrictions. Horton suggested that Indiana's rule should be consistent with the Illinois regulation. Horton offered the opinion that the sport

anglers and tournament fishermen are having more difficulty catching these catfish because the big catfish have had a more abundant food supply in Asian Carp for the past 10 years. Horton explained that the bellies of catfish taken are full of Asian Carp. He concluded that there is no decline in the number of trophy catfish, the trophy catfish are simply harder to catch.

Horton explained that he does not intentionally fish for the large catfish. Instead he fishes for “two pounders that give me 9 ounce fillets; those are my money fish” but when he catches a big Flathead it is a “bonus”.

Horton noted that commercial fishing is also beneficial to the efforts of eradicating Asian Carp. He added that he sells every Asian Carp he catches and reported that many commercial fishermen intentionally harvest Asian Carp. Horton reported that 10,000 pounds of Asian Carp are processed in Kentucky every day and that he, alone, catches, on average, 1,000 pounds of Asian Carp every 2 days.

Andy Patterson – Putnam County, Indiana

Patterson stated that he “feels for the commercial guys in one aspect” but offered that the demand of the pay lakes for trophy catfish does not allow the time necessary for the catfish to get big. Patterson observed that the large catfish do not live for any length of time in the pay lakes thereby creating a continuous need for more fish. Patterson expressed the opinion that a rule prohibiting the transport of live wild-caught fish across state lines would also be beneficial. Patterson stated support for the rule proposal.

Greg Schwipps – Putnam County, Indiana

Schwipps observed that Indiana is “one of very few states that has almost no regulation regarding the taking of catfish” while nearly every other state has regulations many of which are more stringent. He noted that Alabama, and some other states prohibit the transport of fish across state lines. Schwipps also offered the opinion that the demand for catfish created by the pay lakes is “killing the sport.” Schwipps stated support for the proposed rule.

Bill Avery – Camby, Indiana

Avery offered support for the rule proposal taking the position that commercial fishing has molested the rivers and taken advantage of a free natural resource for personal profit. Avery, referring to Jeff Horton’s earlier comment, highlighted the fact that catfish are the only natural predator of Asian Carp, concluding “for that reason, if for no other reason...trophy catfish should be protected in Indiana waters.” Avery acknowledged that bag limits may need to be adjusted for inland waters as compared to boundary waters such as the Ohio and Wabash Rivers.

Grover Scott – Camby, Indiana

Scott commented in favor of the proposed rule. He stating the opinion that catfish populations are only decreasing. Scott agreed with others who commented that catfish are not able to live very long in the pay lakes noting that they die shortly after arrival or during the transport to the pay lake.

Winston Bush – Hamilton County, Indiana

Bush stated that he has fished the Ohio River on a regular basis for almost 30 years from Evansville to Meldahl Dam. He offered that there is a decline in trophy catfish numbers. Bush noted that the catfish are “our only natural predator for Asian Carp” and for that that reason alone should be protected. He recognized that protecting the catfish will not solve the Asian Carp problem but recognized a healthy catfish population would lessen the ability of Asian Carp populations to expand. Bush added that he is not opposed to pay lakes and does not begrudge a person making a living but stated opposition to the exploitation of the natural resource. Bush concluded offering support for the proposed rule.

Phillip Johnson – Gibson County, Indiana

Johnson stated that he fishes the White River. He questioned where people had obtained data that the catfish populations have declined. Johnson agreed that he does not catch as many fish as he used to but stated that the reduction in fish caught is not caused by the net fishermen. Johnson stated the opinion that the fish are simply not coming up out of the Wabash or Mississippi like they used to. Johnson stated opposition to the rule proposal noting that he holds a commercial fishing license and questioned whether it was the intent to eliminate commercial fishing all together.

Mark Warren, Boonville, Indiana

Warren stated that he fishes the Newburgh Pool of the Ohio River with a commercial fishing license costing \$1200 annually. He stated the belief that there is no decline in catfish populations observing that a 3 foot hoop net located any place on the Ohio River will yield Flathead Catfish. Warren stated that he objects to the rule proposal entirely but his “biggest objection is the change in the Channel Catfish Rule from 10 inch to 13 inch” because there is “no shortage of them”.

Kevin Scott, Boonville, Indiana

Scott stated that he fishes commercially and has fished the Ohio River for 30 years. He noted that there is not enough data, except reports from people who can’t catch fish, to support the conclusion that the catfish population is declining. Scott stated that he does not sell fish to pay lakes and suggested if pay lakes are the cause of the problem a rule needs developed to address that concern specifically without having the effect of punishing all commercial fishermen. Scott opposed the rule proposal.

David Cox – Crawford County, Indiana

Cox stated that he owns Midwest Caviar and fishes all of the Ohio River. Cox stated opposition for the rule proposal. Cox noted that Indiana owns approximately 10% of the Ohio River while Kentucky owns the rest and the rule proposal being considered is different than what Kentucky has in place. Cox explained that with the exception of the size requirements for Channel Catfish, Kentucky has a rule that is very similar to the rule being proposed here. However, according to Cox, commercial fishermen who meet criteria stated in Kentucky’s rule are “grandfathered” such that the restrictions do not apply. Furthermore, Cox added that Kentucky has a lottery that allows 50 fishermen to take a larger number of catfish from a particular area on the Ohio River.

Cox explained that he is does not fish for catfish stating that he is strictly a Spoonbill fisherman but he occasionally does keep a catfish. Cox offered that catfish population are not declining and

provided support for the other commercial fishermen stating that they should have some rights protected.

Jack Hite – Ohio County, Indiana

Hite stated that he was raised fishing the Ohio River and has spent many weekends on the River. He explained that he has and he is aware of others who have spent “thousands and thousands of dollars on boats and electronics...” to catch fish. He noted his awareness of the efforts made by DNR staff to verify the drastic decline in catfish numbers. Hite added that even six years ago “it was nothing” for several boats to take catfish over 50 pounds but now catching a 50 pound catfish is rare.

Hite observed that catfish are the “only natural defense we have against invasive species” like Asian Carp and Zebra Mussels. Hite also noted that the inability to catch fish is already disappointing to his children and he is concerned that young people will lose interest in fishing altogether. For these reasons Hite offered support for the rule proposal and recommended more stringent protections be considered, including the prohibition on transporting live wild caught fish across state lines. Hite added that his primary interest is in managing catfish for future generations.

Loren Hopper – Vevey, Indiana

Hopper stated that he supports the rule proposal for the reason that catfish populations are in decline and the resource needs protected. He offered the opinion that the decline is less related to the fishermen who catch fresh fish for a restaurant, a market or to feed a family and is more a result of the demand for catfish from pay lakes. Hite added that the pay lakes are paying \$3.00 per pound for catfish so the profit associated with selling catfish to pay lakes is large. Hite has fished the Markland Pool for 30 years and offered that the decline he has observed is not only with respect to large catfish but it is also seen in the populations of small catfish. Hite said, “Years ago you could go out and catch 20 little Channels in an hour, now you can maybe catch a couple.”

Chris Mangold – Switzerland County, Indiana

Mangold offered “one hundred percent support” for the rule proposal. He stated that he fishes the Markland and McAlpine Pools and has for 15 years. He expressed that all sizes of catfish are declining. Mangold added the recommendation to prohibit the transport of live fish across state lines.

Jim Loudermilk – Butler County, Ohio

Loudermilk reported fishing the Markland Pool of the Ohio River. He offered support for the rule and suggested that additional protection is needed for catfish under 35 inches.

Justin Browning – Butler County, Ohio

Browning reported that he is a tournament angler who has fished the Ohio River from the Mississippi up into West Virginia. Browning noted that he has seen both sides of the issue with respect to pay lakes because grew up on a family owned pay lake and personally observed the transition from farm raised catfish to wild caught catfish. He stated that the use of wild caught catfish has “absolutely destroyed our river system.” Browning reported watching commercial

fishermen pull “thousands and thousands and thousands of pounds out and a lot of them don’t even make it to the lake.” Browning reflected that “greed” has brought us to this point and he has family members who will not speak to him because of his views on this issue.

Browning added that the Markland Pool has been destroyed observing that in years past it was easy to catch 20 – 30 fish a day whereas now “you’re lucky to catch one, two...three a day.” He also noted that tournaments have eliminated the five fish limit because most anglers are not even catching five fish.

Browning supported the rule proposal suggesting that the protections afforded catfish should be even greater than what is being proposed. He recommended that Indiana stop selling out-of-state licenses to fish on the Ohio River. Browning also suggested greater uniformity between states with respect to the restrictions on commercial fishing because the commercial fishermen are travelling to the states with the least restrictive controls.

John Duley – Crawford County, Indiana

Duley reported fishing the Ohio and Wabash Rivers, lakes...everywhere. He recognized the tremendous problem posed by Asian Carp and observed that the only thing helping “are these Blue Cats, big Flatheads, even big Channels.” He agreed with others’ reports that numbers of catfish are declining. Duley explained that he has encountered people at ramps offering to pay \$1.00 per pound for live catfish despite the fact that selling and buying the fish without proper licenses is illegal. Duley observed that this activity is reflective of the demand pay lakes have for catfish. Duley offered support for the proposed rule and encouraged the prohibition on the transport of live fish across state lines.

Larry Young – Crawford County, Indiana

Young stated that he is a recreational and tournament angler. He offered that he has noticed a decline in the number of catfish over the past 10 years. Young offered support the rule proposal.

Randy Seger – Dubois County, Indiana

Seger stated that he does not support the rule proposal.

Nick Matheis – Dubois County, Indiana

Matheis stated that he fishes the East Fork of the White River and offered disfavor for the rule proposal. He stated the opinion that resources need to be concentrated on eradicating Indiana waters of Asian Carp. In response to earlier comments indicating that catfish have a steady food supply in Asian Carp, Matheis questioned the size of the catfish that would be necessary to eat the Asian Carp he is catching that are 15 or more pounds.

Brian Heeke – Dubois County, Indiana

Heeke offered opposition to this rule proposal, particularly the change from 10 inches to 13 inches for channel catfish. Heeke suggested, however, that he would be supportive of a rule that prohibited the transport of live fish across state lines if that would address the problems with pay lakes identified by others who had commented.

Dale Sides – Jefferson County, Indiana

Sides reported that Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, Oklahoma and other states have size limits similar to those proposed in this rule for the protection of large catfish. Sides also noted that other states on the Ohio River, including Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia, allow absolutely no commercial fishing. In supporting the rule proposal, he observed that catfish are “our boots on the ground” in the battle against Asian Carp. Sides observed that with a license fee of \$17.00, sport anglers have a large investment in the natural resources. He acknowledged that on past occasions there has been a need to react to failures in proper wildlife management by actively re-establishing various species of animal in Indiana. Sides recognized the better solution is to be proactive in managing the wildlife instead of being reactive.

Barbara Simpson – Marion County, Indiana

Simpson offered comments on behalf of the Indiana Wildlife Federation (IWF). Simpson offered support for the rule proposal as written offering highlights of comments that were submitted in writing. Simpson stated that opinion that the change from 10 inches for channel catfish would be better for spawning if it were increased to 15 inches instead of only to 13 inches. She suggested increasing that size limit further in the future. Simpson offered the IWF’s position that a bag limit should be established on the total number of catfish taken if for no other reason than to allow for data collection. Simpson noted the inequity in the manner in which fees for sport fishing and commercial fishing are set. She noted that sport fishing fees are set by the Natural Resources Commission at \$17.00 while the commercial fishing license fees were set by statute at rates that have not been increased for many years. Simpson stated the IWF’s position that all fishing license fees should be established by the Natural Resources Commission. Overall, Simpson reiterated the IWF’s stance that natural resources are managed by the Department of Natural Resources in public trust for the benefit of all people and those natural resources should not be taken for profit.

Brian Whitlow – Floyd County, Indiana

Whitlow stated that he is a bank fisherman up and down the Ohio River in the Louisville area and has observed a big decline in the number of fish in and around the Markland Dam. He reported that Louisville has 10 or more pay lakes. Whitlow offered full support for the rule proposal.

Deena Dyer – Shelby County, Indiana

Dyer offered support for the rule proposal.

Mike Dyer – Johnson County, Indiana

Dyer stated that he has been “catfishing my whole life.” He offered that there are fewer catfish and studies prove that to be the case. Dyer noted that the decline is recognized to the extent that rules to conserve and protect catfish exist even in Texas and Arizona.

Additionally, Dyer observed that presently it is possible to take fish from waters with warnings not to eat the fish and sell that fish to a pay lake where it may be caught again, taken home and eaten. He noted that pay lakes made a profit before they started stocking wild-caught trophy catfish and commercial fishing was profitable before they started catching catfish to sell to the

pay lakes. Dyer concluded that both industries will continue to thrive with this rule in place. Dyer stated, “I absolutely support the rule...”

Tom Waskom – Morgan County, Indiana

Waskom explained that he has been a recreational angler for 50 years or more. He acknowledged that everyone needs to be able to make a living but noted that “there are some things we need to protect too...there needs to be limits. Anything that has to do with wildlife if it has no limits on it, it’ll disappear.” Waskom stated that he has observed a declining population of catfish and would like to one day see his grandchildren catching catfish.

Josh Vanover – Owensburg, Kentucky

Vanover offered support for the rule proposal. Vanover runs a Tournament Trail Series of catfishing tournaments in the Owensburg area on the Newburgh Pool of the Ohio River. As evidence that catfish populations are declining, Vanover explained that there were 138 boats registered for the 2014 “Monsters on the Ohio” tournament with participants using \$30,000 - \$40,000 boats and \$5,000 in equipment. Vanover reported that with 138 boats fishing only 3 fish were caught that weighed over 50 pounds. Vanover reported that many tournament anglers will not fish in Indiana because the fishery is bad.

Joe Kwiecien – Stamping Ground, Kentucky

Kwiecien stated that he is a commercial fisherman who supports the commercial fishermen and opposes the rule proposal.

EXHIBIT B**WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED BY REGULAR MAIL, PERSONAL DELIVERY AND THE COMMISSION'S ONLINE RULE DOCKET****Commenter Name** Rob Clodfelder**City** Hillsboro **County** FOUNTAIN **State** IN**E-Mail Address** whiskerwearapparel@gmail.com**Comments** Absolutely support the slot limit for only one fish over 28, 35, 35**Comment Received** 1/13/2015 10:11:02 PM**Commenter Name** Bryan Meharry**City** West Lafayette **County** TIPPECANOE **State** Indiana**Organization (optional)** Indiana Catfish Conservation Association**E-Mail Address** bmeharry@comcast.net**Comments** I am a recreational angler who fishes for catfish almost excursively. I have long awaited Indiana's development of regulations to protect over harvest of trophy sized catfish from our waterways

. The new minimum size limit on channel catfish to give them a better chance to reach reproductive age is long overdue.

I pray adjacent states will follow suit to stop over harvest of the very biggest catfish mainly to sell to pay lakes here and in other states where they are doomed to die while being slowly starved to death and caught again and again until the are but large heads on skinny sore covered fish

. Please do not hesitate as time is of the essence to protect the gene pool of the trophy sized catfish before it has been depleted and there will be no more trophies for future generations to catch

. Close scrutiny of commercial fishermen will be required as they have proven to use means to skirt the rules in order to pad their wallets at the expense of Indiana's catfish resources

. This is an issue the ICCA believes strongly in and our organization will be looking forward to final adoption of this proposed rule change

. I pray this is the first of more regulations such as a bag limit on fish in the slot between the minimum and maximum size. Without future limits on these fish the population will surely decline as pay lake owners and commercial fishermen who sell them catfish find they must resort to taking more of the slot sized cats due to the restrictions on the very biggest catfish.

Furthermore the entire pay lake industry needs further oversight and stricter controls on the yearly totals they may stock based on the size of their ponds and the ability of fish to survive in these environments.

I believe in catch and release fishing when large catfish are concerned. There are many channel catfish of suitable eating size in the rivers I fish. However I have definitely seen a decline in the size and numbers of trophy sized catfish firsthand over my lifetime of fishing..

Thank you for considering my comments and I look forward to a brighter future for trophy cat fishing opportunities for myself, my children and generations to come by the careful oversight and regulation by the DNR and the Natural Resources Commission.

Indiana can lead the way in sensible catfish management. Setting the bar for other states around us to follow.

Comment Received 1/13/2015 10:44:03 PM

Commenter Name larry young
City leavenworth **County** CRAWFORD **State** In
E-Mail Address lyoung.catfish@gmail.com
Comments Im glad to see steps are finally being taken to protect our natural resource.catfish populations have been depleted by the overharvest of large fish by commercial fisherman for personal gain for to long!!! Cf should not be able to take our catfish to out of state paylakes!
Comment Received 1/14/2015 11:43:41 AM

Commenter Name justin Browning
City Trenton **County** Out of State **State** ohio
E-Mail Address mrseaark77@yahoo.com
Comments I strongly support this we have needed this for a long timeI have fish the Ohio River and inland rivers in Indiana for years and I have never seen them in the shape that they are in now unregulated commercial fishing has wiped out public waters all overthe demand for trophy catfish for pay lakes has exploded This regulation is desperately needed
Comment Received 1/14/2015 7:12:30 PM

Commenter Name Scott Wilson
City Falmouth **County** Out of State **State** KY
E-Mail Address wilson3139@yahoo.com
Comments After seeing the catfish numbers decline at a rapid pace of the last 3 to 5 years I am in complete support of the amendments to help protect this valuable resource.
Comment Received 1/15/2015 12:41:41 PM

Commenter Name Pangborn
City Columbus **County** FRANKLIN **State** Ohio
E-Mail Address pangborn@live.com
Comments This issue is far past due .. Th is is great news for the sport.. However the Ohio River is in jeopardy Of over harvest.. It dont make sense to me for a neighboring state to do everything in their power to promote a healthy fishery.. And the other let such a beautiful species be depleted..
Comment Received 1/15/2015 12:45:16 PM

Commenter Name Claude Reynolds
City Williamsburg **County** WAYNE **State** indiana
E-Mail Address bohunter145@aol.com
Comments Lots of people talk about this rule. The way the river is it won't help any at all. There also needs to be a creek limit to help get the littler fish to grow. No since at all for anything under the 34" to be unlimited I bought a 40 in blue on wheeler lake Jan 3 that weight 33 lbs for a example. So how will it help 34" around a 25 lb catfish can be takin with unlimited numbers to get bigger and become a trophy when there is not many trophy fish left there need to be something to help with younger fish. I have been fishing the Ohio river since 2008 and I just beat my personal best with a 44 lb fish i caught on wheeler lake in Alabama this January 2015. I am a residing this state and should NOT have to travel far to go after big fish. But that is what it is comming down to. Be the bigger state and stand up follow Ohio or West Virginia, even Alabama's laws and stop the Live fish hauling across state lines don't let out of state commercial fisherman use our ramps to take the public people's wild caught fish to put in private ponds to gain for themselves. The commercial fisherman that owner paylakes or supply paylakes claim they take care if there fish. If they do then they should not have to go out about everyday of the

year and keep taking away from us public water fisherman to fathoms there ponds. Limit them hard put a size and creek limit on them. Or do what Ohio and West Virginia did and stop commercial fishing all together. That's honestly what lots of us would like to see.

Comment Received 1/15/2015 12:59:44 PM

Commenter Name Ronnie Brewer

City Trimble **County** Out of State **State** Kentucky

E-Mail Address brewerronnie6@gmail.com

Comments The 13" min. Size limits I believe would not make any difference. The bigger issue is the over harvesting of large catfish for profit . A natural resource the license payers are paying to protect. Being taken at such a high rate. That it cannot sustain itself. West Virginia has started a restocking program. I understand that Ohio and Kentucky are studying impact of commercial fishing on the river systems. I believe Kentucky will not budge on this due to exploiting Asian Carp for gain. And Instead letting to one true predator of Asian carp. The catfish is being over harvested.

The Ohio river need slots

But also needs bag limits. I propose a sport fish regulation like that of a large mouth bass. 5 limit. 10 possession. Only 1 over 35". And in the end we save a species and continue to protect our waters from evasive species.

Comment Received 1/15/2015 1:24:27 PM

Commenter Name Alyssa Miller

City Kittanning **County** Out of State **State** Pennsylvania

E-Mail Address alyssamiller7087@gmail.com

Comments I think we definitely need something done about the extremely fast deterioration of the beloved Catfish, a lot of people are exploiting the catfish by commercial fishing and the worst fate of all the Pay Lakes, they are unnecessary and killing the trophy catfish population at an alarming rate, something needs to be done ASAP before its too late... These CFs and Pay Lakers are taking a NATURAL RESOURCE and exploiting it for nothing but PROFIT, it should be illegal

Comment Received 1/15/2015 1:44:29 PM

Commenter Name shawn roth

City burlington **County** BOONE **State** kentcky

E-Mail Address shawnbroth@yahoo.com

Comments We have to get stricter laws and rules These paylakes and Commercial fisherman are wiping us out to the point where fishing is getting nearly impossible around the cincinnati area. Kentucky is next that needs to be on board. Thanks

Comment Received 1/15/2015 2:07:57 PM

Commenter Name Jason kindred

City Freetown **County** JACKSON **State** indiana

E-Mail Address jasonkdog2000@yahoo.com

Comments I think this would be great catfish need to be a sport fish.

Comment Received 1/15/2015 5:31:06 PM

Commenter Name Jim Loudermilk

City Hamilton **County** Out of State **State** Ohio

E-Mail Address jim_loudermilk@yahoo.com

Comments Would also like you to have a possession rule of 1 over per species of catfish per

day. Inactive commercial license reports of more than 90 days be forfeited for the remainder of the season just in case of fraudulent reporting of fishing activities. These commercial fisherman are learning how to beat the system on the Ohio River and IDNR needs to protect its inland waters from this happening to its smaller streams. Thank You!

Comment Received 1/16/2015 1:10:58 AM

Commenter Name mike Kilmer

City Middletown **County** Out of State **State** ohio

E-Mail Address mikeandcaci@cinci.rr.com

Comments I strongly support these regulations tne fishing has been destroyed to the point its not hardly worth fishing anymore I hope its not to late for these regs to work

Comment Received 1/16/2015 3:00:30 AM

Commenter Name Rodney Barker

City Milan **County** RIPLEY **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address rodneybarker3113@gmail.com

Comments I strongly support these regulations. I have seen the decline of trophy catfish in the last few years. we need these regs.

Comment Received 1/16/2015 3:04:34 AM

Commenter Name Kenneth R Baker

City Indianapolis **County** MARION **State** Indiana

Organization (optional) <http://maps.seconlife.com/seconlife/Hwanin/7/56/22>

E-Mail Address qball090872@gmail.com

Comments The out dated 1800's practice needs to be stopped in Indiana on the Ohio river and all inland rivers. There also needs to be a law put in place banning fish coming or going acrossed the state line. Thus would force paylake to go out of buisness or only stock Indiana farm raised catfish.

Comment Received 1/18/2015 2:59:53 AM

Commenter Name Dale Sides

City Madison **County** JEFFERSON **State** IN

E-Mail Address jamessides@seidata.com

Comments I am Very much in Favor Of the regulations proposed at this time My Only concern is that the Pay Lake Demand is Out pacing the Rules and with the new study that came out that the main diet of the Blue Catfish studied was Asian Carp I think it would best to at some time Take Catfish off the list of species to be commercial fished and let them do what they do best EAT ASIAN CARP but as for now I am very happy to see these rules being put in place Thank s To all who put this together

Comment Received 1/19/2015 9:46:27 PM

Commenter Name Dale Sides

City Madison **County** JEFFERSON **State** IN

E-Mail Address jamessides@seidata.com

Comments I am Very much in Favor Of the regulations proposed at this time My Only concern is that the Pay Lake Demand is Out pacing the Rules and with the new study that came out that the main diet of the Blue Catfish studied was Asian Carp I think it would best to at some time Take Catfish off the list of species to be commercial fished and let them do what they do best EAT ASIAN CARP but as for now I am very happy to see these rules being put in place Thank s To all who put this together

<p>Comment Received 1/19/2015 9:48:21 PM</p> <p>Commenter Name jack corpuz City indianapolis County MARION State IN E-Mail Address jc9195757@yahoo.com Comments Totally support this proposed rule. We need to protect our natural resources from commercial exploitation and this rule is a step in the right direction. Now if we can get the other Ohio Rive states on-board I will feel better. Comment Received 1/19/2015 11:20:09 PM</p>
<p>Commenter Name Woody Williams City Newburgh County WARRICK State IN Organization (optional) Hunt-Indiana.com E-Mail Address asats@wowway.com Comments I fully support this proposed regulation on catfishing. For too long commercial fishers have been depleting the catfish to sell to pay lakes. Comment Received 1/20/2015 7:05:30 AM</p>
<p>Commenter Name David Engelking City Nineveh County JOHNSON State IN E-Mail Address whitetaildave24@yahoo.com Comments Making minimum size requirements and not allowing more than one big fish to be kept will allow the catfish to grow bigger and stop the commercial fisherman from demolishing the what's left of the catfish we have in the Ohio River. Comment Received 1/20/2015 10:25:06 AM</p>
<p>Commenter Name Chris Wallace City Muncie County DELAWARE State Indiana Organization (optional) 1978 E-Mail Address evilfud@gmail.com Comments I support this rule 100% and hope to see Catfish recognized as a sport fish in the future like states like MO do. Understanding the true potential of protecting these fish in our waters will benefit the state of Indiana in a lot of ways. Comment Received 1/20/2015 11:16:34 AM</p>
<p>Commenter Name Timothy St Clair City South Bend County ST.JOSEPH State Indiana E-Mail Address stclaircourtreporting@gmail.com Comments Although I live in the northern part of the state, I believe this rule would have a positive effect in preserving a portion of our natural resources and support its adoption. Comment Received 1/20/2015 1:29:02 PM</p>
<p>Commenter Name Jeremy Wills City Sullivan County SULLIVAN State Indiana Organization (optional) n/a E-Mail Address wiley1185@hotmail.com Comments I'm in favor of the rule. Any rule that helps to ensure catfish for the future while still allowing people to fish for catfish Is a good thing, and as far as I can see has no negative effects only positive. So please implement a conservation law so people can enjoy fishing and eating freshly caught catfish.</p>

Comment Received 1/20/2015 2:24:22 PM

Commenter Name sam mercer

City elizabeth **County** HARRISON **State** in

E-Mail Address southernhoops@portative.net

Comments This is long overdue just wish it was stronger

Comment Received 1/20/2015 9:46:43 PM

Commenter Name John Christopher

City indianapolis **County** MARION **State** IN

E-Mail Address antiwheeze@excite.com

Comments In general I support the proposed rule for catfish. Is there a provision for keeping DNR catfish stocked in urban lakes?

Comment Received 1/21/2015 8:21:05 AM

Commenter Name Scott McGhee

City Plainfield **County** HENDRICKS **State** Indiana (IN)

E-Mail Address sbmcghee@gmail.com

Comments I support these changes.

Comment Received 1/23/2015 7:37:39 PM

Commenter Name Eric Radez

City Indianapolis **County** MARION **State** IN

Organization (optional) Indiana Catfish Conservation Association

E-Mail Address eric@globalresourceexpos.com

Comments I want to commend all responsible for making such a positive move towards conserving our State's catfish population! I fish the Ohio river often, and have seen the size of my catches decrease substantially over the past decade. Especially in the Markland Pool.

Thanks again,

Eric Radez

Comment Received 1/25/2015 3:54:50 PM

Commenter Name Elijah Burlingame

City North Manchester **County** WABASH **State** Indiana

Organization (optional) Indiana Catfish Conservation Association

E-Mail Address ejbgame@gmail.com

Comments I support the new rules for catfish. I fish for flathead catfish all summer and really like catching big ones, but we aren't seeing big ones too often anymore. I think the new rules will keep more big catfish in the rivers. Thank you for protecting catfish in Indiana.

Comment Received 1/25/2015 10:32:40 PM

Commenter Name Ben Duecker

City LaFontaine **County** WABASH **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address catmanduecker@aol.com

Comments Regarding the proposed catfish rule changes, I think we are on the right track, but I would like to see things go a step further. Catfishing has become increasingly popular since the 90s and the fishing pressure, both commercially, and recreationally, has increased dramatically during this time. Catfish are some of the biggest and longest living fish we have in Indiana. I would like to see a limit on how many fish can be kept daily (in streams). I believe the size limits in streams should be increased to more than 13", and would like to see a combination of size and possession limit for streams and lakes (instead of ONLY a size limit on streams with no bag

limit, and ONLY a bag limit on lakes with no minimum size limit). I would also like to see regulations put in place to limit or stop commercial fishing for trophy sized catfish. Trophy catfish are highly sought for stocking into pay lakes, which generally overstock numbers of trophy fish into fishing ponds with poor living conditions, often without suitable food or habitat. These stocked wild trophy fish remain in the pay lakes and are caught over and over until they die of starvation or disease. Pay lake owners and commercial fishermen are exploiting this natural resource, and depleting the wild population in the state. This is unethical and borders on wanton waste of these fish. Commercial fishing of catfish serves very little purpose outside of pay lake stocking. I believe that investing in the catfish fisheries in Indiana will pay dividends in the long run. I believe that the proposed regulations are a big step in the right direction and I would encourage future efforts to consider stocking blue and flathead catfish into our lakes and streams as a means of restoring or enhancing depleted populations and establishing sport fishing opportunities. I also believe this effort could provide a much needed bonus of thinning shad, carp, and stunted bluegill populations. Thank you for your consideration.

Comment Received 1/26/2015 9:55:21 PM

Commenter Name Greg Schwipps
City Greencastle **County** PUTNAM **State** Indiana
Organization (optional) ICCA
E-Mail Address agschwipps@gmail.com

Comments We can't pretend this catfish issue is at anything short of crisis mode right now. That's not being dramatic -- that's where we've allowed ourselves to be in 2015. While this rule will offer limited protection to fish over 35", anecdotal evidence suggests there aren't many fish left of that size in either inland waters or in the Ohio River. (And limited scientific data supports it.) They aren't showing up at tournaments any more. Hardcore guides can't find them any more. Those big fish have already been removed by unregulated commercial fishing, and by loosely-regulated trotlining and set-lining. That doesn't mean we don't need this rule. God knows we finally need to have some kind of rule in place to finally give these fish some protection. It means we need to put this regulation in place, and then see if the catfish population can come back to anywhere near where it was even ten years ago.

Comment Received 1/26/2015 10:41:55 PM

Commenter Name Winston Bush
City Sheridan **County** HAMILTON **State** INDIANA
E-Mail Address wbush@arcindy.com

Comments These rules must be implemented.
 I absolutely support these new regulations to protect catfish populations in Indiana. They are a great first step toward giving our catfish the protection from unregulated exploitation that they desperately need.
 I would like the DNR to consider more restrictive regulations for "inland" waters in the future but in the meantime I wholeheartedly back the DNR's rule change aimed to protect larger catfish as wells as allowing smaller catfish the opportunity to spawn before being harvested.

Thank you.

Comment Received 1/27/2015 6:55:17 AM

Commenter Name Ron Schwipps
City Milan **County** RIPLEY **State** Indiana
E-Mail Address rschwipps@gmail.com

Comments A much needed and long overdue rule change. Glad to see it finally coming into

place. Indiana needs to get caught up with many other states on catfish conservation.

Comment Received 1/28/2015 9:51:48 AM

Commenter Name Chris Gentrup

City Bellevue **County** Out of State **State** Ky

E-Mail Address repoman3809@yahoo.com

Comments I support this proposal. Better protection of catfish(particularly catfish in the large rivers,) is a long time overdue!

Comment Received 1/28/2015 11:10:58 PM

Commenter Name Aaron Willis

City Hamilton **County** Out of State **State** Ohio

E-Mail Address theriverrat08@gmail.com

Comments I support this bill and hope that even stricter regulation will be about before the commercial fishing and paylakes industry wipes out this great resource we have

Comment Received 1/28/2015 11:30:26 PM

Commenter Name Mike Greenwell

City Evansville **County** VANDERBURGH **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address Mikeg47711@yahoo.com

Comments I support the new rule!!

Comment Received 1/28/2015 11:52:11 PM

Commenter Name Matt Burlingame

City North Manchester **County** WABASH **State** INDIANA

Organization (optional) Indiana Catfish Conservation Association

E-Mail Address mnburlingame@manchester.edu

Comments The Indiana Catfish Conservation Association applauds the DNR for seizing the opportunity to protect trophy catfish in the state of Indiana. Catfish have been some of the most popular fish in the state of Indiana and in the United States for the last 40 years. Despite this, little has been done to protect these fish from recreational and commercial harvest. In recent years there has been an unprecedented attack on trophy catfish to supply the hundreds upon hundreds of pay lakes in Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, and Michigan. The majority of these 40, 50 and even 60 pound fish come from Indiana waters. These catfish are being harvested from Indiana's waterways without regulation, transported out of state, and overstocked into ponds where they usually die and end up in a dumpster to rot. From a recreational resource standpoint, this is unacceptable.

Ecologically speaking, it is also disturbing. Large individuals, particularly females, in fish populations are essential to repopulation (BOFFFs Sustain Fisheries: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/10/141021101612.htm>; Fishing; More protection for big ones: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/01/140102112241.htm>). These large fish are very rare in overharvested populations. Large blue and flathead catfish are also the one natural line of defense our river systems have against the invasive Asian carp. A recent study from Western Illinois University confirmed that blue catfish eat Asian carp. Stomach content analysis revealed that adult Asian carp were identified as the primary fish species with the highest frequency of occurrence found within blue catfish diets and constituted the greatest percentage of the diet by weight. Allowing the continued overexploitation of our catfish further degrades the ecological integrity of our already troubled river systems. Additionally, allowing

the live transport of these catfish out of the Ohio River basin is an enormous threat to other watersheds as this process will inevitably lead to Asian carp expanding to other areas.

The ICCA supports these new regulations to protect catfish populations in Indiana. Although the ICCA would like the DNR to consider more restrictive regulations for "inland" waters in the future, we wholeheartedly back the DNR's rule change aimed to protect larger catfish as well as allowing smaller catfish the opportunity to spawn before being harvested.

Comment Received 1/29/2015 12:06:09 AM

Commenter Name Michael C Dyer

City Greenwood **County** JOHNSON **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address threequarterfoot@yahoo.com

Comments I absolutely 100% support the rule. Thank you for proposing it.

Comment Received 1/29/2015 7:42:01 AM

Commenter Name Troy Hansen

City Oxford **County** JOHNSON **State** Iowa

E-Mail Address bajastudentloan@hotmail.com

Comments It is good to see you step up and protect a great natural resource! Trophy Catfishing by rod and reel is a fast growing sport. Soon there will be anglers from all over the country coming to fish the waters. They will buy licenses and support your local economy. From a catfish guy in Iowa thanks for protecting the BIG CATS!!!

Comment Received 1/29/2015 7:54:14 AM

Commenter Name Loretta demler

City carmel **County** HAMILTON **State** In

E-Mail Address ameythet59@gmail.com

Comments Save the catfish

Comment Received 1/29/2015 7:56:49 AM

Commenter Name Loretta demler

City carmel **County** HAMILTON **State** In

E-Mail Address ameythet59@gmail.com

Comments Save the catfish

Comment Received 1/29/2015 7:57:48 AM

Commenter Name Eric

City Xenia **County** BARTHOLOMEW **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address eric.bird@my.sinclair.edu

Comments I support this rule change. I believe more rules and regulation or just complete removal of commercial fishing is imperative the Ohio river catfish population.

Comment Received 1/29/2015 8:52:33 AM

Commenter Name Ken Miller

City Cedar Rapids **County** Out of State **State** Iowa

E-Mail Address skunkboy51@aol.com

Comments I am glad to see such a possitive action taken by Indiana. It is a great thing for all the fishermen of the state and might inspire other state to take similar actions. Cat fish have long been a favorite fish for many fishermen in all states. It is good to see your state recognizes them as sport fish. This is long over due. With the popularity of catch and release and tournament cat fishing, many people can now enjoy catching the fish of their lifetime. With proper education of

the masses, we can have a very rich resource in the future...without efforts such as these, many of the trophies will be removed. I commend your efforts and hope other states follow suit.

Comment Received 1/29/2015 9:50:20 AM

Commenter Name David Ashby

City Cedar Bluff **County** Out of State **State** Va

Organization (optional) Bottom Dwellers Tackle

E-Mail Address Bottomdwellerstackle@gmail.com

Comments We travel to fish these waters several times each year and would love to see regulation on catfish put into place and enforced. The catfish fishery has been hit hard , especially on the Ohio river and the fishing is getting to the point it is not worth the time or money to visit from out of state. Please do something before it's too late.

David Ashby

Comment Received 1/29/2015 10:14:31 AM

Commenter Name michael richardson

City independence **County** Out of State **State** Kentucky

E-Mail Address michaelnrichardson@yahoo.com

Comments I think these are great rules and hope that is would encourage my state to adopt and follow your lead thank you.

Comment Received 1/29/2015 11:03:17 AM

Commenter Name Wayne Olson

City Fargo **County** CASS **State** North Dakota

E-Mail Address wjo1218@hotmail.com

Comments I support this

Comment Received 1/29/2015 11:08:57 AM

Commenter Name Justin Adkins

City Aurora **County** DEARBORN **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address catfishmaster1@gmail.com

Comments I support the new rules

Comment Received 1/29/2015 11:27:29 AM

Commenter Name Wray stitcher

City Fredericksburg **County** Out of State **State** VA

E-Mail Address wstitcher@gmail.com

Comments I support the rule

Comment Received 1/29/2015 11:28:18 AM

Commenter Name Adam winder

City owensboro **County** Out of State **State** ky

E-Mail Address adamwinder@roadrunner.com

Comments There needs to be laws for catfish.I 100% support this law

Comment Received 1/29/2015 11:28:33 AM

Commenter Name Mark

City Union City **County** RANDOLPH **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address catfishdreams@gmail.com

Comments I support this

Comment Received 1/29/2015 12:03:21 PM

<p>Commenter Name Tyler City West Jordan County Out of State State Ut E-Mail Address river-rat240@hotmail.com Comments I support this rule! Comment Received 1/29/2015 1:19:24 PM</p>
<p>Commenter Name Brian Stubblefield City FAYETTEVILLE County LAGRANGE State Tennessee E-Mail Address brian@rdelect.com Comments I support this rule. Comment Received 1/29/2015 2:14:21 PM</p>
<p>Commenter Name Joey Eddy City Clarksburg County HARRISON State Wv E-Mail Address Macheteeddy21@yahoo.com Comments I support this 100% Comment Received 1/29/2015 2:32:49 PM</p>
<p>Commenter Name James Pauley City Franklin County Out of State State WV Organization (optional) Mastercatters2.com E-Mail Address flatheadsrus@gmail.com Comments Please stop the sale of freshwater species by banning commercial fishing. Sportsmen pay for the protection of wildlife and fisheries, now do it. Comment Received 1/29/2015 5:12:22 PM</p>
<p>Commenter Name bluecat City florence County SWITZERLAND State indiana E-Mail Address chrismangold39@gmail.com Comments I'm write this in my concern of the over harvesting of catfish in our water ways. Our rivers have been destroyed by commercial fisherman just for the fish to go to pay lakes and die weeks later. It is totally wrong for a select few to make big profit off of a resource we all pay for. Comment Received 1/29/2015 8:49:47 PM</p>
<p>Commenter Name erick Vaughn City chambersburg County Out of State State pa E-Mail Address evaughn@retail.foodlion.com Comments I support this rule Comment Received 1/30/2015 5:07:24 PM</p>
<p>Commenter Name Tim Schwipps City Milan County RIPLEY State IN E-Mail Address tschwipps@yahoo.com Comments I feel this rule change is desperately needed as the catfish resource has been exploited. The proposed rule would allow our natural catfish populations to hopefully reestablish itself and aid in the defense of invasive species such as Asian carp. The State must step up and put this rule in place and then provide the enforcement to end the siege on the catfish populations. We have fished the various inland rivers for several decades and have noticed a drastic decline in the quality and quantity of catfish caught in both White rivers. I just hope we haven't allowed the populations to take such a hit that they can't recover. Let's stop managing the</p>

catfish like we managed the buffalo and be a little proactive here.

Comment Received 2/2/2015 9:30:11 AM

Commenter Name Mike A. Clark

City Gary **County** LAKE **State** IN

E-Mail Address 3212blueg.mc@gmail.com

Comments For protective measures proposed to guard against exploitation of all catfish species.

Comment Received 2/4/2015 11:56:32 PM

Commenter Name Mike A. Clark

City Gary **County** LAKE **State** IN

E-Mail Address 3212blueg.mc@gmail.com

Comments For protective measures proposed to guard against exploitation of all catfish species.

Comment Received 2/4/2015 11:58:57 PM

Commenter Name Mike A. Clark

City Gary **County** LAKE **State** IN

E-Mail Address 3212blueg.mc@gmail.com

Comments For protective measures proposed to guard against exploitation of all catfish species.

Comment Received 2/5/2015 12:01:02 AM

Commenter Name Mike A. Clark

City Gary **County** LAKE **State** IN

E-Mail Address 3212blueg.mc@gmail.com

Comments For protective measures proposed to guard against exploitation of all catfish species.

Comment Received 2/5/2015 12:02:03 AM

Commenter Name Mike A. Clark

City Gary **County** LAKE **State** IN

E-Mail Address 3212blueg.mc@gmail.com

Comments For protective measures proposed to guard against exploitation of all catfish species.

Comment Received 2/5/2015 12:02:49 AM

Commenter Name Bolt Rigsby

City Indianapolis **County** MARION **State** INDIANA

E-Mail Address inonetoner@hotmail.com

Comments Wholeheartedly support the new rules. Wish they went further but a much needed step on the road to better management of this precious resource.

Comment Received 2/9/2015 8:43:14 AM

Commenter Name Winston Bush

City Sheridan **County** HAMILTON **State** INDIANA

E-Mail Address catfishingmetals@yahoo.com

Comments Catfish must be protected and these new regulations will help to do that, especially the large fish that are being specifically targeted in huge numbers for the paylake trade. There has been much talk about asian carp having no natural predators. This is untrue. Scientific analysis showed that asian carp made up over 50% of catfish stomach contents in over 70% of those sampled.

Catfish, especially the large and trophy sized fish do eat asian carp in large quantities and therefore should be protected if for no other reason than to help in the fight against asian carp. Catfish alone will not fix the asian carp issue but shouldn't we make the most of protecting them if they are helping in any way.

Comment Received 2/11/2015 2:42:05 PM

Commenter Name Gaylen Pickard
City Terre Haute **County** VIGO **State** in.
E-Mail Address s_pickard@msn.com

Comments Having fished on the West fork of White River in Greene county over 50 years and being 70 years old I am Not opposed to the 1 channel over 28 inches and the 35 inch on Blue and Flathead per day limit, even now their are more larger ones I have ever seen during my fishing years. I do feel the 13 inch limit on catfish is Not necessary,leaving only larger ones to eat. Maybe a limit of 12 per day on sizes 10 to 13 . Thank you for allowing comments.

Comment Received 2/12/2015 2:17:20 PM

Commenter Name Dave Rowe Sr.
City Lafayette **County** TIPPECANOE **State** Indiana
E-Mail Address rowed@purdue.edu

Comments I support this rule change.

Comment Received 2/12/2015 10:49:51 PM

Commenter Name Jack Hite
City Rising Sun **County** OHIO **State** Indiana
E-Mail Address jackhite75@gmail.com

Comments Very strong supporter of turning Catfish into a sport fish. Wish they could stop commercial fishing of catfish all together! Have been an Indiana resident most of my life growing up on the Ohio River cat fishing. Have tournament fished the last 20 yrs and in the last five yrs have noticed a huge drop in trophy sized fish and catfish in general, due to commercial over harvest. Transporting trophy catfish across state lines to stock paylakes. Should be laws in place to prevent catfish from being taken from the Ohio River and any Indiana waters. Laws against transporting live fish across state lines to be sold etc... Sincerely Catfish Tournament Angler Team Hite ! Have two young daughters and wife that fish with me and they're losing interest bc the don't see why I'm so passionate about cat fishing bc more often than usual with all the high ten finders and accessories its getting harder and harder to catch catfish let alone trophy size catfish. Catch Photo Release always

Comment Received 2/13/2015 2:03:21 AM

Commenter Name Charles Luck
City Muncie **County** DELAWARE **State** IN
Organization (optional) Indiana Catfish Conservation Association
E-Mail Address charlesluck@yahoo.com

Comments I fully support the proposed rule changes to catfish regulations.

Comment Received 2/15/2015 7:20:37 AM

Commenter Name Stephen Richard
City Evansville **County** VANDERBURGH **State** Indiana
E-Mail Address ser3842@wowway.com

Comments Leave It at 10 inches The best eating catfish are 10-12 Inch Fiddlers. Thanks

Comment Received 2/15/2015 10:51:01 AM

Commenter Name greg williamson
City newharmony **County** POSEY **State** in.
E-Mail Address gregpwill59@gmail.com

Comments Glad to see the changes coming.You need to get ill. On board also.I live on the banks

of the Wabash and see the wholesale slaughter of our fish by ill. Commercial fishermen . literally harvesting tons of our fish.we have the opportunity for trophy fish here.strict enforcement is needed I know of a few commercials fisherman that scoff at the laws.it would take just one heavy fine to get the word out this will not be tolerated.thank you for these changes,way over due

Comment Received 2/15/2015 4:56:26 PM

Commenter Name Matt Burlingame

City North Manchester **County** WABASH **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address mnburlingame@manchester.edu

Comments I am writing to support the proposed regulations to protect blue, channel, and flathead catfish. Increasing the lower length limit to 13 inches will allow many of the fish in these populations to reach an age and size where they can spawn at least once before having the possibility of being harvested. Likewise, protecting the larger fish will allow more large females to spawn numerous times as the reach trophy size. Research has documented the importance of these large females for ensuring the sustainability of fish stocks. These large individuals are also important for maintaining the biological integrity of our aquatic ecosystems. Not only do Indiana's largest & most aquatic predators (catfish) help balance our native fish communities, but recent research has also shown that blue catfish actually selectively feed on the invasive Asian carp. A study from Western Illinois University found that blue catfish stomach contents had a 72% frequency of occurrence of Asian carp. The carp consumed Asian carp ages 3-4 that were about 26 inches long. Asian carp this age and size are sexually mature adults. Obviously it is crucial to protect these large catfish to allow them to feed on Asian carp and let our native predators do what they can to help with this invasion.

Thank you IDNR for seizing the opportunity to protect Indiana's catfish resources. They are worthy of our support and respect -- as a biologically essential component of our aquatic ecosystems and as the biggest baddest game fish an angler in Indiana can go pursue!

Comment Received 2/15/2015 10:35:04 PM

Commenter Name Kevin Farrar

City Evansville **County** VANDERBURGH **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address Endlesspursuitoutdoors@yahoo.com

Comments am writing to support the Indiana Department of Natural Resources' proposal to change the regulations for the harvest of blue, channel, and flathead catfish. Increasing the lower length limit to 13 inches will protect many more fish to an age when they can spawn. Adding the restriction of allowing only the harvest of one channel catfish over 28 inches, one blue catfish over 35 inches, and one flathead catfish over 35 inches will protect larger individuals to spawn many times and continue to grow to trophy size. Thank you for working to protect our natural resources and the opportunity to be involved with the process.

Comment Received 2/16/2015 7:55:56 AM

Commenter Name Alyssa Miller

City kittanning **County** Out of State **State** Pennsylvania

E-Mail Address alyssamiller7087@gmail.com

Comments I think that we definitely need some kind of regulations on the beautiful catfish. They have been considered trash fish for many many years, yet people are over harvesting them to the point of no return, they need to be stopped before its too late. I also think paylakes should NOT be able to take a natural resource and use it for pure profit, them fish go through hell for

nothing more than the mighty dollar, this all needs to stop... Please please please help save the trophy catfish

Comment Received 2/16/2015 12:29:59 PM

Commenter Name Gale Urquhart

City Johnston **County** Out of State **State** Iowa

E-Mail Address guns.knife.bible@gmail.com

Comments Please make it so the commercial fisherman can not take our catfish, blue catfish and flathead catfish from our rivers.

Thank you very much.

Gale

Comment Received 2/16/2015 1:55:24 PM

Commenter Name lizzie Sides

City Madison **County** JEFFERSON **State** IN

E-Mail Address jamessides@seidata.com

Comments I am writing to support the Indiana Department of Natural Resources' proposal to change the regulations for the harvest of blue, channel, and flathead catfish. Increasing the lower length limit to 13 inches will protect many more fish to an age when they can spawn. Adding the restriction of allowing only the harvest of one channel catfish over 28 inches, one blue catfish over 35 inches, and one flathead catfish over 35 inches will protect larger individuals to spawn many times and continue to grow to trophy size. Thank you for working to protect our natural resources and the opportunity to be involved with the process.

Thanks Lizzie

Comment Received 2/16/2015 1:55:54 PM

Commenter Name Bill Norton

City Upland **County** GRANT **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address billnorton@walnutcreekarchery.com

Comments I am in favor of the proposed rule changes on catfish.

Comment Received 2/17/2015 11:44:48 PM

Commenter Name Bryan Meharry

City West Lafayette **County** TIPPECANOE **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address bmeharry@comcast.net

Comments It is about time some protection is afforded to the apex predator and leading consumer of asian carp in our river and lakes. Please, do not hesitate to pass this rules change. it is a start in the right direction. Hopefully it will lead to more scrutiny of the action of those who fish the rivers rarely seen by a DNR Officer.

Comment Received 2/22/2015 2:18:46 PM

Commenter Name Shane Coomes

City Indianapolis **County** MARION **State** Indiana

Organization (optional) Indiana Catfish Conservation Association (ICCA)

E-Mail Address madeofstone78@yahoo.com

Comments After reading the proposed regs, I would love to see the minimum size change be 15in instead of 13in. But its a start in the right direction. Tho I am totally against Commercial Fishing I would also love to see a daily bag limit set on legally harvested catfish. Just a thought. But i dont feel that these rules will make much difference because the Commercial guys have depleted so many fish already, but again step in the right direction. To an avid fisherman like

myself any step is a good step.

I would love to know how these rules will be enforced also cause we know that there is always going to be someone trying to manipulate any and all loopholes they can find in the new rule changes. I have so much more but limited on time and wanted to make sure I got some of my 2 cents in. Thank you

Comment Received 3/2/2015 7:18:06 PM

Commenter Name Aaron Wheatley

City Owensboro **County** DAVIESS **State** Kentucky

Organization (optional) Monsters on the Ohio

E-Mail Address aaron_wheatley9@hotmail.com

Comments I 100% support the rules changes on Catfish in your State. Worked HARD with Kentucky to make changes and changes were made. Love seeing Indiana getting on board to protect this natural resource. As a sports fishermen that spends over 100 days a year fishing the Ohio River, Thanks !!

Comment Received 3/2/2015 7:34:20 PM

Commenter Name Jack arnold

City Connersville **County** FAYETTE **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address jackarnold68@yahoo.com

Comments We must protect and make catfish a sport fish that should not be removed from the river for any other purpose but food.

Comment Received 3/2/2015 8:21:31 PM

Commenter Name Mike Paul

City grove city **County** Out of State **State** ohio

E-Mail Address neversnaganchors@gmail.com

Comments The commercial fishermen have decimated the trophy catfish population in the Ohio River. I've recreational fished it for 30 years and have witnessed it firsthand! We buy fishing license to sport fish for a ghost species now. The big cats are sold to paylakes. A natural resource that's supposed to be protected is being sold for PRIVATE gain. We wouldn't be allowed to go onto a state park and chop down trees and sell them for profits!! Regulate the catfish now!! Protect it for my children, their children and future generations to enjoy!! Regulate before it's too late

Comment Received 3/2/2015 8:25:38 PM

Commenter Name Bill Phillips

City Table rock **County** Out of State **State** Nebraska

E-Mail Address whitetail2003@hotmail.com

Comments This rule needs to be applied! I have friends and know people who say the Ohio river is being rapped by commercial fisherman and don't want this done in Indiana!!!

Comment Received 3/2/2015 8:41:39 PM

Commenter Name SAM BROOKS

City WEST LAFAYETTE **County** TIPPECANOE **State** IN

Organization (optional) TOURNY FISHERMAN

E-Mail Address THECATFISHINHOLE@YAHOO.COM

Comments GREAT TO SEE TROPHY CATFISH GETTING THE PROTECTION THEY DESERVE

Comment Received 3/2/2015 8:53:45 PM

Commenter Name Chad Waugh
City Kendallville **County** NOBLE **State** Indiana
Organization (optional) Extreme Catfishing Tournament Trail
E-Mail Address catdaddydchad@yahoo.com
Comments I fully support the new catfish rule changes
Comment Received 3/2/2015 11:20:24 PM

Commenter Name Jordan L
City Pottstown **County** Out of State **State** Pennsylvania
E-Mail Address philliesbraves09@aol.com
Comments Hello! I do not agree with Flathead Catfish being taking out of their natural environment alive and being sold as slaves to make people money and die for no other reason then that and be put in a dumpster to be taking away or just thrown to the side to rot away out of site from any ones eye but there is plenty of photos out there with Flatheads sitting in dumpsters etc rotting away. Flathead Catfish is a trophy fish. If you are going to allow it to be commercially fished. The fish should only be allowed to be sold killed before commercially sold for human consumption and that is it. They are not pets or slaves or a circus animal etc. This is million times worse then a captured whale at sea world etc cause these Flathead Catfish have no chance to survive in a man made pond, they will be lucky to live for a month where a whale in captivity can live for many years cause its given the right kind of environment and care to survive in captivity which these Flatheads do not, They let them die in a month and just go get more. Where if these Flatheads were never taking out of their environment could live many years if not caught and became someones dinner. I strongly believe you and many other states, specially Kentucky really need to think these laws over. Im not really sure about Pennsylvania laws on this subject but i dont see any paylakes around here and ones i know of are all pond raised etc not fish taking out of their natural environment to make a buck. Thanks for reading, hope Indiana gov fights this subject more then other states i seen that really do not care.
Comment Received 3/3/2015 12:00:54 AM

Commenter Name Mike Greenwell
City Evansville **County** VANDERBURGH **State** Indiana
E-Mail Address Mikeg47711@yahoo.com
Comments I'm in favor of this rule!
Comment Received 3/3/2015 12:35:34 AM

Commenter Name Ryan Moran
City Cedar Grove **County** FRANKLIN **State** In
E-Mail Address Rmoran171@yahoo.com
Comments Please pass regulation on catfish! The Ohio River has been decimated over the last 5 years of quality and quantity of blue, flathead and channel catfish. Commercial fishing has severely depleted the 3 species and left unregulated. Studies have shown that mature catfish are an line of defense against the Asian carp invasion currently happening. Please do the right thing and protect OUR natural resource.
Thank you,
Ryan Moran
Comment Received 3/3/2015 7:29:14 AM

Commenter Name Ron Streeter
City Lawrence **County** MARION **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address radioron903@aol.com

Comments Would like to see the catfish as a sport fish and a limit also put on streams and rivers. The fishing pressure on catfish has the numbers way down and the size also. Let the commercial fishermen raise catfish in ponds. They pay less for a license than the average fisherman.

Comment Received 3/3/2015 8:55:58 AM

Commenter Name Rick Hahn

City Rineyville **County** Out of State **State** Kentucky

Organization (optional) Driftwood Catfishermen's Club

E-Mail Address xtremexpress@windstream.net

Comments These regulations are badly needed. The catfish are being plundered by commercial fishermen for sale to pay lakes.

Comment Received 3/3/2015 7:58:03 PM

Commenter Name John Barr

City Lancaster **County** Out of State **State** Ohio

E-Mail Address jbbarr10@gmail.com

Comments Please protect our trophy river catfish by enacting these new regulations on the Ohio river for our future generations to enjoy. Commercial fishing of Trophy Catfish on the Ohio River has all but destroyed the fishery. Please join Ohio, West Virginia, and Kentucky in fight to protect our beloved River Monsters. Thank you for your time.

Comment Received 3/3/2015 10:19:00 PM

Commenter Name Buddy Julick

City Cayuga **County** VERMILLION **State** IN

E-Mail Address beagler7388@sbcglobal.net

Comments As a commercial fisherman I disagree with a one fish a day over size limit rule proposal.

Comment Received 3/4/2015 4:54:29 PM

Commenter Name C.T. Schrader

City West Lafayette **County** TIPPECANOE **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address ctschrader33@gmail.com

Comments Since commercial fishing isn't allowed on the Wabash River above Lafayette, I believe the 10 inch limit on channel catfish should remain as such from Lafayette north on the river.

Comment Received 3/8/2015 3:32:53 AM

Commenter Name Andrew Snider

City Westfield **County** HAMILTON **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address arsnider2012@gmail.com

Comments I think this is a good start to helping the commercial fishing dilemma on the Ohio and Wabash but we need to go a step further and ban commercial fishing on the Ohio and Wabash altogether. They are state resources and it is not right for commercial fishermen to deplete the resource to make money. I spend a LOT of money on hunting and fishing every year as well as buy a license and take several people fishing that buy licenses and spend money as well. I cannot justify to continue to travel to the Ohio or Wabash to not catch fish because guys around me are pulling them out of the river in hoop nets. Look at the Missouri River and Taylorsville lake, two of the great blue cat fisheries in the US because they do not allow commercial fishing and they have creel limits. We could have a great blue cat fishery as well but

we have to make catfish a sportfish and ban Commercial fishing.

Comment Received 3/11/2015 8:48:17 PM

Commenter Name Thomas Abercrombie
City Sanders **County** Out of State **State** ky
E-Mail Address gethooked0713@gmail.com
Comments I support this rule
Comment Received 3/23/2015 11:08:56 AM

Commenter Name Tashi
City Franklin **County** WARREN **State** Ohio
E-Mail Address tashia1968@gmail.com
Comments I appreciate and support the new catfish regulations. Let's keep our natural resources protected.
Comment Received 3/23/2015 11:48:15 AM

Commenter Name terry jackson
City rising sun **County** Out of State **State** indiana
E-Mail Address jrabe7@embarqmail.com
Comments I support the new catfish regulations!!! If you don't there wrought be any catfish left in 5yrs in the Ohio river!!
Comment Received 3/23/2015 12:01:53 PM

Commenter Name Kris Joshu
City Phoenix **County** Out of State **State** Arizona
E-Mail Address krishjosu@yahoo.com
Comments I support the new proposed regulation
Comment Received 3/23/2015 12:09:17 PM

Commenter Name Andy patterson
City coatesville **County** PUTNAM **State** Indiana
Organization (optional) Indiana catfish conservation association
E-Mail Address andydonna2000@yahoo.com
Comments I feel the proposed rule changes are a good starting point for some long over due regulations, although I as well as many anglers feel there is much more, in the near future, that needs to be addressed.
Some of these areas that also need addressed would include commercial fishing, paylakes, transportation of live fish, separate set of rules governing inland rivers apposed to the ohio river. I would also like to thank IDNR for the opportunity to be a part of the rule making decisions
Comment Received 3/23/2015 12:19:24 PM

Commenter Name sam brooks
City west lafayette in **County** TIPPECANOE **State** IN
Organization (optional) bass pro big cat quest sponserd fisherman
E-Mail Address THECATFISHINHOLE@YAHOO.COM
Comments good change catfishing has gone down hill for years i dont even catfish at home anymore its to depressing
Comment Received 3/23/2015 12:31:57 PM

Commenter Name Denessa DeHart
City Middletown **County** Out of State **State** Ohio
E-Mail Address ddehart@woh.RR.com

Comments I support the rule change
Comment Received 3/23/2015 12:39:57 PM

Commenter Name John Duley
City Crawfordsville **County** MONTGOMERY **State** Indiana
E-Mail Address Johnduley13@yahoo.com

Comments I support the catfish rules. We need your help with the declining catfish population due to commercial fishing. Also they are the only predator to fight against Asian carp. Thank you for taking the time to read this. Sincerely John
Comment Received 3/23/2015 2:17:07 PM

Commenter Name Eric Ruemler
City Reynolds **County** WHITE **State** Indiana
Organization (optional) Anglers Against Commercial Fishing
E-Mail Address eruemler@yahoo.com

Comments These proposed changes should have been in place years ago, especially in regards to commercial fishing. If things continue unchecked as they are, our future generations will NOT know the pleasure of hooking into a trophy catfish. It takes far to long for these fish to grow to just keep sitting back and watching them being plundered from MY/OUR waters by commercial fishermen. While my personal view frowns on the proposed changes because it makes it harder for me to put food on my table, I whole heartedly support them simply because it will put much needed limitations in place for commercial fishing.
Comment Received 3/23/2015 5:21:51 PM

Commenter Name Brian
City Elsmere **County** Out of State **State** Ky
E-Mail Address Brianarmstrong84@hotmail.com
Comments i support the catfish reg. thank you!
Comment Received 3/23/2015 9:22:00 PM

Commenter Name Randall Howard
City Dayton **County** Out of State **State** Ohio
E-Mail Address backupbait@prodigy.net
Comments I support the new catfish regulations.
Comment Received 3/24/2015 8:26:41 AM

Commenter Name Chris wallace
City Muncie **County** DELAWARE **State** Indiana
E-Mail Address evilfud@gmail.com
Comments I am writing to support the Indiana Department of Natural Resources' proposal to change the regulations for the harvest of blue, channel, and flathead catfish. Increasing the lower length limit to 13 inches will protect many more fish to an age when they can spawn. Adding the restriction of allowing only the harvest of one channel catfish over 28 inches, one blue catfish over 35 inches, and one flathead catfish over 35 inches will protect larger individuals to spawn many times and continue to grow to trophy size. Thank you for working to protect our natural resources and the opportunity to be involved with the process.
Comment Received 3/25/2015 2:27:25 PM

Commenter Name nick howard
City versailles **County** RIPLEY **State** Indiana
E-Mail Address nhoward223@yahoo.com

Comments I vote yes! protect our catfish! catfishing has become a waste of time! you can't catch whats not in there. They have all been sold to paylakes! If this passes maybe I will catch some fish 5 years from now. Also who is the genius who decided to drain west boggs? Yeah lets make the ONLY decent bass lake in the state of Indiana a crappie bluegill hole like every other SHIT lake in Indiana.

Comment Received 3/31/2015 1:49:26 AM

Commenter Name Jeffery Stoner

City North Vernon **County** JENNINGS **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address jas1736@yahoo.com

Comments While commercial fishing serves a vital commercial interest, far too many "bad apples" have damaged the Ohio River catfish population by taking the best breeders (and those with little value to the food processing industry) and sold them to pay lakes with no benefit to the food web of the state's waters. If we can just limit the largest fish form being taken from the Ohio, the food processing industry is unharmed, the ethical commercial fisheries are unharmed, and the rivers are improved. The large catfish also serve to slow the spread of Asian catfish, which have the potential for even more severe damage to both commercial and recreational fishing.

Comment Received 4/3/2015 7:58:37 PM

Commenter Name Josh Worth

City Greenfield **County** HANCOCK **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address worth3505@yahoo.com

Comments As an avid fisherman and hunter, I am becoming increasingly frustrated that my target species of choice is being allowed to be so heavily harvested and practically eradicated. Catfish are harvestable in huge quantities at this point and the means to do so just as endless. As an angler, I am allowed 3 rods. I don't disagree that is ample amount to fish with. Limb lines, jugs and bank poles are allowed a great many more than that and they don't even have to stay with the gear in order to harvest fish. I am a die hard sport fisherman and do not understand how as I am out actively seeking fish to catch on rod and reel, that another person has already lined countless miles of rivers with lines and bank poles and just walks away. The numbers of catfish in the rivers are terrible at this point. The large number of people using these methods, as well as the careless legality of commercial fishing in our Indiana rivers is totally unsustainable. As a taxpayer and license holder, I feel that my money is not going towards what really matters, the sustained fishing of Indiana rivers. I spend as much or more on boats, licenses, tags etc as any other bass fisherman and those practices certainly are not allowed when harvesting any other species. Furthermore, I would like to point out that in my time on the rivers, I have never once come across a DNR officer or boat. Not only is the legality of those methods impractical, people are not even doing them legally. I have not once come across a properly labeled limb line, bank pole or jug. This is a tremendous hazard when navigating our small rivers, such as the White. I ask that these careless and unsustainable practices be eliminated and if not totally eliminated, restricted to a much higher degree than they are now. I support our DNR 100%, but I feel very let down. The catfish are disappearing and the state is allowing it to happen. I have already abandoned our larger rivers because of the hoop nets supplying paylakes, only to find miles of deserted river and alternative methods lining the river banks.

Comment Received 5/11/2015 3:16:08 PM

Commenter Name Darin Hull

City Reelsville **County** PUTNAM **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address dahull@crrtc.com

Comments The intent of this proposed rule seems logically for the conservation of the fisheries. The repercussions of this rule are to be considered. The push for more conservative length limits on any fish mainly come from trophy clubs, tournament fishermen, and competitive circles. I think the 13 inch rule would be beneficial to protect the species. The maximum rule on one big catfish of each species is purely competition oriented. This same thing happened with the transformation of the one buck rule in the whitetail regulations. To ensure the outdoorsmen of Indiana are heard equally a simple questionnaire mandated before license purchase is the best way people of all profiles to have a say in their government. Politics of special interests, money, and open-door meetings that the average person cannot attend for one reason or another keeps this agency ruled by a slight minority. I'm sure this catfish rule will be mandated but I am totally against it and the total voice of the people will be suppressed to a select few. The IDNR is moving toward the profitability of a company and away from its first mission of being a servant to the people of the state of Indiana.

Comment Received 6/17/2015 4:45:00 AM

Commenter Name greg

City newharmony **County** POSEY **State** in.

Organization (optional) williamson

E-Mail Address gregwill59@gmail.com

Comments At last some sort of change to the limits on catfish. good start but more needs to be done. i live on the banks of the Wabash I have witnessed the gross raping of our fishery. commercial fishing by just a few has decimated our area for years. thumbing their nose at our regs. By hanging literally hundreds of life b lines and trot lines placing names of people that are not even near the river. also why is it I can set 10 lines, while they set 20 or more nets under one name. i do appreciate the new regs. Hope they are enforced. these guys are laughing at them now. seriously pathetic. good start come and enforce or your efforts are for not.

Greg williamson newharmony in.

Comment Received 6/28/2015 4:17:57 PM

Commenter Name Claude Reynolds

City Williamsburg **County** WAYNE **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address bohunter145@AOL.com

Comments I would love to see the stop of Paylakes and commercial fishing for catfish. Put regulation in place for sport fisherman and ban commercial fishing or at least stop the transportation of live fish across state lines with stricter regulations. Something has to be done and fast. The regulations that got placed in Kentucky are a joke but a starting point. They are using and damaging a public resources for the profit of there own. It's sad to have to travel 3+ hours to have a better chance at a trophy catfish when we can have it in our back yard. I would also like to see lakes stocked with blues in Indiana. Brookville would be a good lake to test that in deep cold and lots of baitfish. And have very strict rules on lakes. At least the commercial fisherman can't get them. It's sad seeing on social media the thousands of pounds each year going to these paylakes to die and be gambled on is sicking. If it was a whitetail from the public going into a high fence you would be all over it. Same as a bass, crappie, pike, walleye, ect. The sad thing is I am seeing Asian carp getting stocked in paylakes what if some got out and introduced to a watershed there not in. Something major needs done and fast or it will be my kids at my age before we see another trophy fishery. Pray Indiana does the right thing and go farther then Kentucky did

Comment Received 7/23/2015 12:57:07 PM

Commenter Name Thomas Abercrombie

City Warsaw **County** Out of State **State** Ky

Organization (optional) Anglers against commercial fishing

E-Mail Address Gethooked0713@gmail.com

Comments I move for a complete ban on commercial fishing. They are destroying the river faster than it can replenish itself. Our tax dollars are to protect and conserve the resource we all love. Paylakes are the demand behind the destruction of this resource which is our front line defense on invasive species. Also I would add with the growing interest I'm catfishing they should be classified as a sport species. I grew up on the river here on the markland pool and I can assure you the impact on the fishery is real! Let's make an effort I'm conserving the future of catfishing please.

Comment Received 7/23/2015 1:02:39 PM

Commenter Name Ray VanHoosier

City Independence **County** Out of State **State** Kentucky

E-Mail Address Kutless937@gmail.com

Comments Commercial fishing has really hurt the Ohio River's number of trophy catfish. Something needs to change soon.

Comment Received 7/23/2015 1:16:15 PM

Commenter Name David Ashby

City Rosedale **County** Out of State **State** VA

Organization (optional) Bottom Dwellers Tackle

E-Mail Address david@bottomdwellerstackle.com

Comments I do not think it is understood the potential revenue that trophy catfish can generate for those areas fortunate enough to have the resource. Fisherman are willing and do travel all over the country to pursue trophy catfish. I travel to many states each year, including Indiana and I spend money all across several states to get to these locations. Lodging, food, fuel, supplies, and licenses are just some of the money brought to an area when it attracts fisherman from both the local population and out of state traffic as well. Protect the trophy resource while you have it.

These fish do not grow to trophy size overnight. DNR studies show it can take a blue catfish as long as 15 years to reach 30 pounds, some waters take much longer to produce a trophy class fish. Catfishing is quickly becoming the fastest growing freshwater sport in the US. Last year it was the 2nd fastest and its popularity isn't slowing down, its just moving to other states that protect the resource and welcome the revenue it can provide.

Sincerely,
David Ashby
Bottom Dwellers Tackle

Comment Received 7/23/2015 1:26:45 PM

Commenter Name Andrew Snider

City Westfield **County** HANCOCK **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address arsnider2012@gmail.com

Comments I'm sorry but this rule is weak and needs to do more to stop or at least hinder commercial fishing. Commercial fishermen using hoop nets are taking all of the big blue and

flathead catfish out of the Ohio river and selling them to pay lakes for profit. This is basically the equivalent of market hunting by selling deer or turkey which was made illegal. If something isn't done soon there wont be any big fish left in the Ohio to fish for.

Comment Received 7/23/2015 1:37:59 PM

Commenter Name Jack Arnold

City Connersville **County** FAYETTE **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address jack.l.arnold68@yahoo.com

Comments I feel that all commercial fishing should be stopped for a period of time to allow for the catfish to repopulate or to grow. Within the last 5 years the Ohio river has went from producing large number of big fish to not seeing hardly any around the Cincinnati area. Or maybe different areas could be restricted.

Comment Received 7/23/2015 1:45:16 PM

Commenter Name Bill Ward

City Mooresville **County** Out of State **State** NC

Organization (optional) Catawba Catfish Club

E-Mail Address muddfolks@aol.com

Comments The bag limits are an improvement, but I would urge that commercial fishermen be banned from harvesting any number of catfish per day, and limit the harvest to recreational anglers only.

Comment Received 7/23/2015 3:45:48 PM

Commenter Name Winston Bush

City Sheridan **County** HAMILTON **State** INDIANA

E-Mail Address catfishingmetalsman@yahoo.com

Comments You must pass these new regulations; time is running out for Indiana's trophy catfish.

Comment Received 7/23/2015 3:58:40 PM

Commenter Name Kyle wilkus

City danville **County** Out of State **State** Illinois

E-Mail Address kwilkus87@comcast.net

Comments The over harvest of our catfish resources to stock pay lakes needs to be stopped.

Comment Received 7/23/2015 4:01:07 PM

Commenter Name Randy Merta

City chandler **County** WARRICK **State** Indiana

Organization (optional) commercial fisherman

E-Mail Address netman8718@gmail.com

Comments Here we go AGAIN. During a recent conversation with two Indiana ICO's Lahay and Kenne who govern the commercial fishermen of Indiana. They told me that the catfish proposal was ridiculous. They said nobody contacted the ICO'S and asked them for their opinions, thoughts or suggestions.

This is another knee jerk reaction by the DNR to make some New York mad catter happy.

Comment Received 7/23/2015 5:13:30 PM

Commenter Name Lyle Stokes

City Buffalo **County** Out of State **State** Mo

E-Mail Address blackhorserods@gmail.com

Comments It is evident to me that not everyone understands that catfish as a sport is the fastest

growing fishing sport in the nation. It is also hard to believe that in some states they are not considered sport fish, how can that be? They are the largest, hardest fighting fresh water fish in nearly every state in the nation. It is very clear that the people in your department do not understand the amount of revenue that is generated in the sport of catfishing. My wife and I travel in several states every year catfishing, we buy motel rooms, fuel, eat out every meal, permits to be legal and anything else we need. I will continue to travel to states that support catfish conservation, the Ohio river once a great place to fish, is in the saddest shape of any river in the United States due to over harvest of breeding size catfish. As your state loses revenue due to people not coming there to fish, you should understand this is one of the reasons. According to the Missouri Department of Conservation study's, it takes 30 years to grow a 30 pound river blue catfish, when numbers of them are taken out of a river daily, it is not long before there isn't any breeders left. Please stop bending over to the commercial guys and pay lake people, the sportsmen are the ones paying your bills, take care of them like you should, maybe then they won't have to take their money out of state to catch a decent fish.

Comment Received 7/23/2015 7:56:25 PM

Commenter Name Loren Hopper Jr

City Vevey **County** SWITZERLAND **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address catfishhunter_2012@yahoo.com

Comments I will make this short! The Commercial Fishing has to stop before there are no fish left for anyone to catch. The Commercial Fisherman have taken so many fish from the Ohio River where I live they are moving on to other rivers. When you take thousands of pounds of fish daily the numbers drop fast.

This is what I think the regulations should be - ANY Catfish over 10lbs should be released, PERIOD, NO EXCEPTIONS, and a limit of 7 fish per day. I look at it this way 5 fish weighing 6 to 8 pounds is a good size supper for a family. NO need for any catfish to be kept if weighing over 10lbs. C.P.R.QPYVB

Comment Received 7/23/2015 8:23:27 PM

Commenter Name Loren Hopper Jr

City Vevey **County** SWITZERLAND **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address catfishhunter_2012@yahoo.com

Comments I will make this short! The Commercial Fishing has to stop before there are no fish left for anyone to catch. The Commercial Fisherman have taken so many fish from the Ohio River where I live they are moving on to other rivers. When you take thousands of pounds of fish daily the numbers drop fast.

This is what I think the regulations should be - ANY Catfish over 10lbs should be released, PERIOD, NO EXCEPTIONS, and a limit of 7 fish per day. I look at it this way 5 fish weighing 6 to 8 pounds is a good size supper for a family. NO need for any catfish to be kept if weighing over 10lbs. C.P.R.QPYVB

Comment Received 7/23/2015 8:24:40 PM

Commenter Name Michael Greenwell

City Evansville **County** VANDERBURGH **State** Indiana

Organization (optional) Just a avid catfisherman

E-Mail Address Mikeg47711@yahoo.com

Comments I support the Catfish regulations. They would help the fisheries buy allowing better fish to be caught and therefore, getting more people to buy fishing license, therefore more money into the state..

Comment Received 7/23/2015 9:29:18 PM

Commenter Name Chris Gentrup

City Bellevue **County** Out of State **State** Ky

E-Mail Address repoman3809@yahoo.com

Comments Please, please, please see these regulations through! Thanks!

Comment Received 7/23/2015 9:45:15 PM

Commenter Name David cox

City Bellevue **County** Out of State **State** Kentucky

E-Mail Address Davecoxxx@gmail.com

Comments I have grown up on the Ohio river my whole life. My parents have had houseboats as I have boats on the river at Manhattan Harbour.

I have seen a dramatic decline in the catfish population. I support strict regulations for commercial and recreational fisherman. I would like to see a stop of live wild catfish to pay lakes as they are not an ideal habitat for the huge number they are stocking. I think pay lakes should have to get the fish from hatcheries as they are for private proffit and not regulated by the state. Thank you for your concern of the catfish and all you do.

Comment Received 7/23/2015 10:16:03 PM

Commenter Name Jonathon

City Saint charles **County** WABASH **State** Missouri

E-Mail Address noj77@msn.com

Comments The dnr needs to take action to protect trophy catfish. They routinely die off quickly at paylakes and then the cycle repeats itself. The state needs to protect its catfish population for many generations to come.

Comment Received 7/23/2015 10:44:57 PM

Commenter Name Shane Coomes

City Camby **County** MARION **State** Indiana

Organization (optional) Indiana Catfish Conservation Association

E-Mail Address shanemc3603@yahoo.com

Comments Strongly agree the new rules need to be made and laws inforced on this matter. The over harvest of catfish in our state and surrounding states have declined the populations of these fish severely. But at a meeting a couple of years ago I was told directly that a catfish's spawning size would be around 14-15in. So wouldnt be better to give the minimum size a chace at a first spawn before netting it from the river system. Just thinking more spawns the more fish. After all replenishing the rivers and lakes are key to survival of the three species. Along with survival of the few and far between giants that are left in the waters mentioned. Im very instrested in this upcoming meeting and will be attending. And looking forward to preserving all catfish species mentioned for my grandsons generation to injoy.

Comment Received 7/24/2015 12:20:28 PM

Commenter Name Kyle Simmons

City Raytown **County** Out of State **State** MO

E-Mail Address boost3782@yahoo.com

Comments Your on the right track regulating these trophy catfish. Over harvest and greed by a few are killing this resource that takes 10 plus years to recover and that is only if these few allow it to recover which as you can see all over social media they won't and do not care.

Missouri has had it's fair share of travel down the catfish regulations path. It has been a long road for us over here but we are now reaping the benefits from the regulations. The fishing is getting better year after year and I have seen the sport grow ever year with it.

Please don't let the commercial fisherman and pay lakes continue to steal from your states sportspeople just to turn a buck and then throw these dead trophies in the dumpster afterwards. Every one knows the pay lakes which should be called pay ponds can not and do not sustain large catfish. That is why they stock thousands of pounds constantly to replace the dead. All taken from large rivers and lakes.

Please put a stop to this for future generations of catfish anglers to be able to enjoy.

Comment Received 7/24/2015 1:22:24 PM

Commenter Name Jetson Bates

City Middletown **County** Out of State **State** Ohio

E-Mail Address jetsonb@gmail.com

Comments I am definitely in favor of these proposed regulations as it saddens me to see the excessive harvest of large catfish from the Ohio River. In the Ohio River section bordering the state of Ohio, we have seen the blue catfish go from an endangered species to a species that is now undergoing significant harvest - all before there was a chance to see where the numbers and maximum size would peak. I am sure that there is more money to be made by the state from issuing sport fishing licenses than to issue commercial fishing licenses. From a resource conservation and economic standpoint. I believe that enacting these changes will be of positive benefit.

Comment Received 7/24/2015 6:08:59 PM

Commenter Name Jeffrey Grey Jr.

City Ingalls **County** MADISON **State** Indiana

Organization (optional) Indiana River Cats

E-Mail Address littlej3622@aol.com

Comments I have been fishing catfish tourneys for the past ten years and over that time I have seen a major change in the number of fish as well as the size of the fish that are caught. I mainly fish the Wabash and the White River and maybe fish the Ohio once a year but the Wabash and the White are losing fish left and right. These laws definitely need passed and if possible we need to completely ban the commerical fishing of catfish. I spend too much money on catfishing each year to have the fish I am fishing for taken out of our rivers by commercial fishermen.

Comment Received 7/25/2015 9:11:57 AM

Commenter Name Chris pelzel

City Harrison **County** Out of State **State** Ohio

E-Mail Address Pelzelchris@yahoo.com

Comments You need to think about the future and not picking sides. At the rate the catfish are disappearing everyone is going to lose in the near future. In next few years there will not be any catfish left for the rod and reel guys or for the pay lakes. Then everyone will be pointing their fingers at you guys!

Comment Received 7/26/2015 6:35:45 PM

Commenter Name Christian Jones

City Hamilton **County** Out of State **State** Ohio

Organization (optional) Youngunzfishin

E-Mail Address Youngunzfishin@gmail.com

Comments Hello my name is christian jones im from butler county Ohio just a short thirty minutes away from your wonderful state. Im commenting on this proposed change in favor of the proposed regulations i am only 23 years old I guess I would be considered the new generation of catfisherman and in just the very few short years of me targeting these beautiful predators I have seen a sharp decline in numbers being caught in my local waters as well as those around me. To be able to take a natural resource for private gain is just not right while these hundred of thousands of pounds of fish from your and my waterways being taken out of their natural habitat to go die in a paylake where no fish can survive, unfortunately these fish cannot live under the conditions which these lakes are kept under and die a slow painful death to later be tossed away in a garbage can. Big catfish are the top predators in freshwater in North America and keep invasive species such as the asian carp at bay, and we have all seen the damage. They have done to your neighboring state in Illinois to keep taking the top predator from your waterways could and will end in ecological disaster the asian carp has slowly made its jaunt north up the Ohio River and since these commercial fishing operations there numbers have drastically increased and their movement north started going faster. I am commenting on this in support of the change because I want my children to be able to catch a trophy fish.

Comment Received 7/27/2015 12:29:15 PM

Commenter Name albert

City cincinnati **County** Out of State **State** ohio

E-Mail Address albert.ilgenfritz5@gmail.com

Comments Stop these paylakes from stealing catfish out of the rivers they are taking to many and to many trophy size fish to toss in a pond that most of them are less than 20 feet deep its taking a animal from its natural environment its stealing and should be considered animal abuse

Comment Received 7/27/2015 12:38:17 PM

Commenter Name John Barr

City Lancaster **County** Out of State **State** Ohio

E-Mail Address Jbbarr10@gmail.com

Comments Please, protect our trophy catfish from commercial fishermen and pay lakes so that future generations of anglers will have an opportunity to catch these river monsters. As an angler on the Ohio river, we have seen a dramatic decrease in numbers of trophy blue and flatheads that can be directly attributed to the paylake industry. If you remove these apex predators out of the river system, it will be that much easier for the big head and silver Asian carp to take root. The mature blue and flathead are crucial to maintaining balance in the river ecosystem. Please save our beloved river monsters!!!!

Comment Received 7/27/2015 12:59:10 PM

Commenter Name Travis Selby

City Palestine **County** Out of State **State** Illinois

E-Mail Address travisselby25@yahoo.com

Comments Catfish should not be allowed to leave one body of water to another. They seem to die off when put into smaller ponds or lakes and caught over and over again. If a paylake wants trophy size catfish buy from a farm not take the fish from public waters. General commercial fishing is fine under the new size limit rules but should be restricted to the amount of equipment to be used. I'm a tournament and recreational fisherman and would love to see catfish become giants again they also are one of the top predator fish to eat Asian carp. Tournament should abide

buy the size limit rules established by each state. I'm pro catfishing! These fish are native to the waters and should be protected from over harvesting of commercial fishing. I think paylakes should be fined a minimum of \$250 for every catfish that does in there "business".

Comment Received 7/27/2015 1:40:36 PM

Commenter Name Wray Stitcher

City Fredericksburg **County** Out of State **State** Virginia

E-Mail Address wstitcher@gmail.com

Comments If there is no size limit set in place all big breeder fish will be gone , all the trophy fish will be gone .

I'm in virginia but I make a yearly trip (1500 mile round trip) to fish the Ohio river system . It's disheartening to see big fish taken from the river with no recourse from DNR to stop or check anyone especially the commercial fisherman. Look what has happened to alot of the big saltwater species from over harvest of big fish .

Comment Received 7/27/2015 1:57:52 PM

Commenter Name Graham maxwell

City Rochester **County** Out of State **State** Pa

E-Mail Address Gmax3056@gmail.com

Comments Please stop the commercial fishing of catfish it effects everyone who shares the river.

Comment Received 7/27/2015 2:11:11 PM

Commenter Name Robert Griffith

City Greendale **County** DEARBORN **State** IN

E-Mail Address rxheven11@yahoo.com

Comments These "commercial" fisherman are exploiting their privileges to sustain only a temporary income. The time these fish need to grow to the targeted size far exceeds the expected time of survival in a "paylake" . Thus creating a need to over harvest the resource, only creating a temporary subsistence from said resource. This math works with any resource one would "plug" into the equation. Our government is the only entity with jurisdiction over the harvesting of natural resources, and we the people rely on your protection. Thank you

Comment Received 7/27/2015 6:09:34 PM

Commenter Name Dylan Ford

City Norman **County** Out of State **State** Oklahoma

E-Mail Address dylanford.64@gmail.com

Comments PRO CATFISH

Throw the big ones back. Conservation!

Comment Received 7/27/2015 6:33:34 PM

Commenter Name Gaylen Pickard

City Terre Haute **County** VIGO **State** in.

E-Mail Address s_pickard@msn.com

Comments Request the Natural Resources Commission would consider having a Daily Bag Limit of 10 channel catfish per day from 10 inches to 13 inches instead of having a 13 inch limit on all of the daily catch. If you enjoy eating Catfish, the ones that are 10 to 13 inches are the best you can get. Larger ones are not as good fried whole as the ones 10 to 13 inches. Also a 10 bag limit of the 10 to 13 inch channel catfish would be enough for a good meal. Thank you.

Comment Received 7/27/2015 7:27:00 PM

Commenter Name Lee Whitaker

City Henryville **County** CLARK **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address Hossdaddy88@aol.com

Comments This bill is unnecessary and over reaching. Nothing wrong with regulation but this is too much.

Comment Received 7/28/2015 9:10:13 PM

Commenter Name Greg Aron

City Alexandria **County** Out of State **State** Virginia

Organization (optional) PRMC

E-Mail Address Zixer636@aol.com

Comments Please stop allowing these Catfish to be transported out of state!

Comment Received 7/29/2015 5:18:01 PM

Commenter Name Bryan Newton

City Spotsylvania **County** Out of State **State** VA

E-Mail Address newton47201@hotmail.com

Comments Although I now live out of state, I grew up in, and my family still lives in, Knox County, IN and I held the state record for blue catfish from '95 - '98. I applaud you for your recent efforts and proposed legislation to manage the catfish fisheries in Indiana. Its long overdue. My family has fished the White & Wabash Rivers for generations and have seen a constant, steady decline in both the size & numbers of catfish. While commercial fishing is necessary to control the numbers of smaller fish in some fisheries, it needs to be monitored and managed to maintain a thriving ecosystem. This also applies to the number of fish leisure anglers are allowed to keep as well. I sincerely hope this legislation passes and would also like to recommend that you eliminate the transportation of live fish. This is wrong. It is no different than taking a deer and putting it in a pen, which is already illegal. The fish that are taken from the river to paylakes (some out of state) are plagued with disease and starvation for nothing more than someone's personal gain. These trophy fish are the key to a thriving fishery. They possess the genetics and dominant traits that make them the preferred breeding stock.

I return to Indiana often and fish there several times a year. I hope to see the fishery return to the healthy levels my great grandpa enjoyed yet in my lifetime.

Education of the public would go a long way as well. A lot of people just don't know any better. I for one, was one of them for many years.

Thank you for your time, and feel free to contact me for any reason regarding these matters.

Sincerely,

Bryan Newton

7325 Elmore Lawson Lane

Spotsylvania, VA 22552

Phone: 703-615-8547

Email: newton47201@hotmail.com

Comment Received 7/29/2015 5:26:11 PM

Commenter Name Thomas H Waskom

City Paragon **County** MORGAN **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address twaskom@aol.com

Comments This is a needed change to the fishing regulations to preserve and even restore the catfish population to waters governed by Indiana DNR. The trophy catfish population have been damaged significantly by commercial fishing for sales to pay lakes. This is a step in the right direction saying enough is enough. Restoring these trophy catfish will bring money into the state by those wishing to catch a trophy catfish. By increasing the numbers of the trophy catfish, the income produced by those wanting to (CPR) catch, photograph and release these large fish will far exceed the catch and destroy (in large numbers) that was happening in the past.

Comment Received 7/29/2015 6:27:46 PM

Commenter Name Brian Lin

City Cincinnati **County** HAMILTON **State** Ohio

E-Mail Address Blin4sale@gmail.com

Comments I would love to see this rule change. The quality of fishing up in West Virginia section of the Ohio River is amazing. Down from Ohio and Kentucky it has suffered due to the commercial fishing. Now that Kentucky has put in the same restrictions it will hopefully help the fishing. The rod and reel anglers have to follow the size limits, the commercial fisherman should have to follow them as well. Catfishing is the fastest growing sport in fishing and we need to have the quality of fish around to keep that sport growing. On top of that I want my daughter to be able to catch the trophy class fish that I was once able to due and I want her kids to have the chance to catch them as well.

Comment Received 7/31/2015 8:45:11 PM

Commenter Name Mike Clabaugh

City andrews **County** HUNTINGTON **State** IN

E-Mail Address mclabaugh@sbcglobal.net

Comments I strongly support the DNR and this rule change. Over harvesting of large catfish from public waters by commercial/sport fishermen and sold to pay lakes for profit should cease immediately.

Comment Received 7/31/2015 9:35:45 PM

Commenter Name Trevor Harmon

City North Vernon **County** JENNINGS **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address tb_harmon@hotmail.com

Comments I'm in favor of this rule

Comment Received 8/2/2015 10:36:44 AM

Commenter Name Chris mangold

City florence **County** SWITZERLAND **State** indiana

E-Mail Address chrismangold39@gmail.com

Comments I'm just wanting to state my opinion!! I think commercial cat fishing for trophy size catfish should be outlawed. These large fish are being taken at an alarming rate , just to be stocked in pay lakes where the survival rate is very low, hence the reason why they stock on a weekly to monthly bases. The river systems can't sustain this kind of practice. So I'm really hoping Indiana will pass so good regulations and hopefully Kentucky will do the same eventually so the Ohio river will be as good of fishing as it once was.

Comment Received 8/3/2015 9:08:34 PM

Commenter Name John
City Crawfordsville **County** MONTGOMERY **State** Indiana
E-Mail Address Johnduley13@yahoo.com
Comments Thanks for the opportunity to place a comment. These big catfish take years and years to grow the size they do. They are the only predator fish that size that will eat those Asian carp. Also there are many fishing tournaments that bring millions of dollars to our state and if nothing is done they will stop coming to indiana. So I ask for me and millions of other anglers out there please start putting some regulations on commercial fishing and thank you again.
Comment Received 8/3/2015 9:09:29 PM

Commenter Name Larry Shepherd
City Hillsboro **County** Out of State **State** OH
E-Mail Address ohiopaylake@aol.com
Comments The laws in place are just fine the way they are. Why change them and try to hurt business.
Comment Received 8/3/2015 10:08:39 PM

Commenter Name James Loudermilk
City Hamilton **County** UNION **State** Ohio
E-Mail Address jim_loudermilk@yahoo.com
Comments Need a limit on Blue cat and Flathead catfish between 13-35 inches for commercial fishing on all river systems. No limits on those size equals no future trophies.
Comment Received 8/3/2015 11:54:14 PM

Commenter Name Jeremy
City Cincinnati **County** HAMILTON **State** Ohio
E-Mail Address Jramp2038@cinci.rr.com
Comments I agree 100% on the proposed changes, these big fish take years to grow and how fast they tend to die in paylakes is alarming. Something needs to change to ensure the sustainability of these fish. Its ridiculous they are legally able to set trot lines in the rivers and take 1000's of pounds of fish. Being there are so many paylakes it adds up quickly and they just are unable to keep them alive and healthy.
Comment Received 8/4/2015 12:25:47 AM

Commenter Name Jarred
City Bowling Green **County** Out of State **State** Kentucky
E-Mail Address jarred.grimsley@yahoo.com
Comments Catfish are an important predator of any river system. With the invasion of the asian carp species, catfish are one of few predators able to feed on these fish. It is known that flathead catfish are capable of eating a fish up to one third of it's body weight. With the flathead catfish reaching sizes up to 123 pounds, which is the world record caught in Kansas in 1998, this means that fish near 41 pounds can be eaten. This proves that catfish are a valuable resource in one of many matters.
Comment Received 8/9/2015 8:33:00 AM

Commenter Name Capt Ben Goebel
City Mt Vernon **County** POSEY **State** in
Organization (optional) rivercitycatfishing guid service
E-Mail Address rivercitycatfishing@gmail.com
Comments We need this rule to protect are trophy blue catfish . I make no since not to have this

rule if Kentucky has it and needs to apply commercial fishermen. I hope this passes so my kids have chance to catch big catfish.

Comment Received 8/9/2015 10:27:26 PM

Commenter Name Jim Marchisio

City Uniontown **County** Out of State **State** Ohio

E-Mail Address jdmarchisio@hotmail.com

Comments This is a great rule in regard to protecting a large natural predator in its environment along with producing a consistent rule for the Ohio river fishery (and other shared waterways)

It would also help to put specific language as the large fish taken may not be sold or traded to pay lakes as a form of cash or other asset.

Thank You.

James D. Marchisio

Comment Received 8/10/2015 1:34:12 PM

Commenter Name Kendall McMillan

City Sunman **County** DEARBORN **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address kennymac222@yahoo.com

Comments I feel this is of the utmost importance to be passed. We don't have commercial deer hunting or commercial small game hunting, why do we allow commercial fisherman to run rampant on our fisheries. The paying sportsman have to abide by bag limits and size restriction.SO SHOULD THE CF. Catfish are as much a game fish as bass, walleye,muskie or any other. Lets start treating them this way. The CF say they need to fish to make a living, Well I could make a living killing and selling deer or any other game animal too, but I'm not allowed. It is time everyone has to play by the same set of rules. If we don't protect this resource, our children and grandchildren will not know the thrill of catching a large catfish on the river. I know of several people just in my small community that no longer purchase a fishing license because they no longer catch fish of the quality they did just 10 or so years ago. this is a shame because that is lost revenue to the State that would be used to improve upon our sportsman's outdoor opportunities. The report stating the decline in the weight CF are reporting supports that there has already been a decline in the catfish population. I'm sure they are not fishing any less, just catching less fish. If the reported numbers are correct. I will close with this request, Please adopt this rule change at a minimum. I want to be able to fish with my children and grandchildren and see the looks on their faces when they hook into a trophy class catfish, and without this I don't see that being a realistic goal.

Thank you for your time.

Kendall McMillan

Comment Received 8/12/2015 11:09:47 PM

Commenter Name Shane Williams

City Mayfield **County** Out of State **State** KY

E-Mail Address Shanewms@att.net

Comments We need these kinds of regulations in place and enforced so in future years we all can enjoy catching trophy catfish. Too many fish are harvested and sold to pay lakes. It's getting harder to catch quality fish in areas where the commercial fisherman are constantly removing the

big ones.

Comment Received 8/15/2015 1:42:50 AM

Commenter Name ROBERT HACQUET

City COVINGTON **County** FOUNTAIN **State** IN

E-Mail Address lhacquet@hughes.net

Comments Is this an attempt to try an stop or slow down the jumper population in Wabash River? Missouri Blues do like to eat jumpers. Flatheads to lazy to chase them. Is this part of Sport fishing lobby against commercial fisherman? There are less commercial fisherman than there once was. Do away with 35in. One per licence holder rule on Flats. Do the 13 inch rule on channel , blues, an flats R. H.

Comment Received 8/18/2015 4:16:55 PM

Commenter Name Heath Malone

City Rensselaer **County** JASPER **State** IN

E-Mail Address indiana.hunter@yahoo.com

Comments I support the new catfish regulations. I would also support a smaller daily limit on catfish.

Comment Received 8/18/2015 9:42:54 PM

Commenter Name Chad Hall

City Covington **County** FOUNTAIN **State** Indiana

E-Mail Address chhall94@yahoo.com

Comments What is the reasoning behind changing daily limit to only being able to keep one per day that is 35 inches more? I don't keep small fish so they can get bigger. Is it because of the jumpers?

Comment Received 8/19/2015 9:05:11 PM

Commenter Name Barbara Simpson

City Indianapolis **County** MARION **State** Indiana

Organization (optional) Indiana Wildlife Federation

E-Mail Address simpson@indianawildlife.org

Comments Comments to Natural Resources Commission Public Hearing August 24, 2015

LSA Document #14-510: Proposed Rules for catfish, both commercial and sport taking, amendment to 312 IAC 9-7-3 governing catfish, amendment to 312 IAC 9-7-16 governing sport fishing on the Ohio River, amendment to 312 IAC 9-8-2 governing commercial fishing for catfish except on the Ohio River, amendment to 312 IAC 9-8-6 governing commercial fishing for catfish on the Ohio River.

The Indiana Wildlife Federation supports the proposed rules establishing a minimum size limit of 13 inches for channel, blue, and flathead catfish; and the bag limit of one catfish over 35 inches per day.

Additional comments:

1. We support the increase in the minimum size limit from 10 inches to 13 inches to increase spawning success but believe it does not go far enough to protect breeding populations. As reported to the commission during preliminary adoption hearings, catfish reproductive size is

approximately 15 inches. A 15 inch limit should be considered in the future if needed.

2. We request consideration of a bag limit on the total number of fish harvested per day, in addition to the limit of one over 35 inches. Currently there are no limits. Also, we request commercial fishermen be required to report numbers of fish caught, in addition to pounds of fish. The data are important to help manage the resource.

3. Fee reasonableness and equity between sport and commercial fishing should be addressed. Fees should be set to cover the cost of administration, and should be set by one body. Currently commercial fees are set by the legislature and sport fees set by the NRC. These two duties should be combined under the NRC.

4. Specifically to commercial fishing fees, as long as Indiana continues to allow commercial fishing for catfish, and the selling of live fish, the fees should more realistically reflect the value that is being taken from the public trust. The commercial fishing business is profiting from a wildlife resource that is managed and maintained largely by sportsmen women fees and the associated federal grants for the benefit of the public. An example is the per-net cost of \$4 for commercial fishing compared to the \$17 sport fishing license fee.

5. Overall, we are concerned about the commercialization of wildlife. Catfish, and other wildlife, are in fact owned by the public for the benefit of all. The commercial taking of catfish in unlimited quantities for sale and profit violates this key tenet of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

In closing, these proposed rule changes are a good first step to addressing the growing concern of many conservationists regarding the commercialization of wildlife, and how well our Indiana natural resources are or are not being properly managed and protected for future generations.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Simpson
Conservation Policy Director
Indiana Wildlife Federation
708 East Michigan Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202
317-875-9453
simpson@indianawildlife.org

Comment Received 8/21/2015 3:43:53 PM

Commenter Name austin vaughn
City south shore **County** Out of State **State** ky
E-Mail Address austin16@aol.com

Comments hi my name is austin i catfish the ohio river in all pools of water. i really strongly recommond regulations. now days big trouphy catfish is being wiped out because of such high demands from paylakes and all the commical fishermen see is the money sighns they dont care about what the long term affect of this is. i live close to severl paylakes and offen on the greenup pool you cant fish a day without seeing them loading or unloading sometimes two different paylakes at the same time.this has had a huge affect on are trophy catfish paylakes stock huge

amounts of these fish a year and they are put in small lakes and are caught over and over intill they offen die of hunger or being miss handeled. i have fished your guys pool of water and it holds some pretty good fish and i plan on fishing it more if all the fish doesnt get took and sold.. dont let this awesome trophy get wiped out do someting before its to late. there are thounds of people that love to catch these awesome fighting fish and turn them back loose to make another anglers day. so dont let your great streatch of river get wipped out. sincerely a concerned catfisherman

Comment Received 8/23/2015 9:50:20 PM

Commenter Name Tonya Dowell

City Bellevue **County** Out of State **State** Ky

E-Mail Address tonya6921@yahoo.com

Comments Please regulate what commercial fishers and paylakes can take from our rivers. Thanks!

Comment Received 8/23/2015 10:36:26 PM

Commenter Name Gary Gentrup

City Bellevue **County** Out of State **State** Ky

E-Mail Address cggentrup@yahoo.com

Comments Please stop commercial fisherman & paylakes from over-harvesting catfish from our rivers. Thanks!

Comment Received 8/23/2015 10:40:42 PM

Commenter Name Beverly V

City Greenup **County** Out of State **State** Kentucky

E-Mail Address Basketcaze30@aol.com

Comments There needs to be regulations on commercial fisherman rapeing the Ohio River pretty soon there's not going to be no big ones left!! please do something to keep the big ones in our river for our future generations !!!

Comment Received 8/23/2015 11:47:08 PM

Commenter Name Bill Avery

City Camby **County** MORGAN **State** Indiana

Organization (optional) ICCA

E-Mail Address wja1966@yahoo.com

Comments Trophy catfish population's in Indiana's inland rivers have been nearly eradicted. We can no longer allow commercial mass harvest and sport overfishing of this slow growing native species from our rivers. Enough is enough.

Comment Received 8/24/2015 11:46:52 AM

Commenter Name Ben Duecker

City LaFontaine **County** WABASH **State** Indiana

Organization (optional) Indiana Catfish Conservation Association

E-Mail Address Catmanduecker@aol.com

Comments I am unable to make the public meeting on the proposed catfish rule changes. I am strongly in favor of the proposed rule change. I agree that trophy fish regulations are in place, and hope that in the future more sport fish opportunities exist for catfish.

Comment Received 8/24/2015 1:03:04 PM

Commenter Name Chris DeBow

City Cincinnati **County** Out of State **State** Ohio

E-Mail Address chris369145@yahoo.com

Comments I commend the State for taking action to protect the catfish. Commercial fisherman have been over harvesting the Ohio and Wabash rivers. These commercial fisherman will not stop until every last catfish is harvested. They are selling these large fish to the paylakes where the fish dye a slow death due to repetitive catch and poisons from the copper sulfate. The Tennessee River has been protected from overharvesting and the ENTIRE fishery has benefited. The Tennessee River system has some of the best crappie, bass and catfishing in the U.S. More catfish does not hurt the other species. it makes them stronger and bigger. Commercial fisherman will do or say anything because they are losing money as more and more states put restrictions on large catfish. Please keep in mind, that DNR's responsibility is to protect wildlife so that it can survive for generations to come. (<http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/5446.htm#mission>)

DNR was not created for economic development. Commercial fisherman will lose money as there are more and more restrictions to protect the large catfish. While seeing anyone lose money is difficult, the DNR must protect the fish that cannot protect themselves.

In closing, it is estimated that there were between 3 to 5 billion passenger pigeons when America was colonized. Martha, the last passenger pigeon on the earth, died in 1914 in the Cincinnati Zoo. These birds were hunted to extinction by commercial hunters. No one wanted to agree that there was every a problem. Over harvesting of any species can have long standing implications. Thank you for taking the first step in the protection of large catfish with the State of Indiana.

Respectfully,

Chris DeBow

Comment Received 8/24/2015 1:42:28 PM

Commenter Name Jason Lynam

City Lawrenceburg **County** DEARBORN **State** IN

E-Mail Address jasonlynam@hotmail.com

Comments Hello gentleman,

I have fished the Ohio river for over 15 years, I am 31 and learned catfishing on a boat was the best recreational sport I have found so I pursued it strongly, I initially wa no good like anyone lucky to catch a few channels and a blue or flathead if lucky, my turning point was when I turned 23 I learned how to drift, at this time I never knew commercial fishing was even on the Ohio river and never seen them on the river, for two years I fished 4 days a week catching anywhere from 25-30 blues from 5-50lb a day, no kidding, best two years of my life. I fished one general bend of my section of the river, well I started seeing a boat pulling nets through that bend at the end of the year and saw him continuously for the next two months while I wa not out on the water, I got my boat out early that spring and realised there was no fish to be caught on that bend, I was a pro at this spot always caught numerous fish but couldn't understand what happened. Well I spoke with a couple regulars and they informed me that catfish paradise had come around and he loads his lakes weekly, I just brushed it off and found some new holes, wasn't hard just needed to travel a little further but the fish were there, I began seeing more commercial fisherman through the river on my travels and noticed the decline immediately, I went from catching no fish because of lack of skills at age 16 to catching huge fish at 23 and seeing tournament results that I ran go from 140lbs out of 5 fish to win to literally 30lbs, the

lowest I have seen is 4.6lbs winning first of 12 boats, UN believable the damage the commercial fisherman have caused due to stocking paylakes in just a short 7 years, please stop this desecration of a great sports fish as I see it and thousands of others also see, I don't know how this has gone on as long as it has but it needs stopped so maybe before my child is to old for me to show them what a great natural resource IN has to offer is wipe out for what? Payloads to overstock to the point that all these fish are gone, as to say the least, I placed 3rd and 7th in the last 4 year of the biggest catfish tournament in the world, 150+ boats, two day weight was 123 for 3rd and 84lbs and 87lbs for the two 7th place spots, but the scarier part of that is over 70% of boats didn't get over 5lbs in two days, this is the world's largest organized tournament in IN on the Ohio river, thanks.

Comment Received 8/24/2015 2:12:24 PM

Commenter Name Michael C. Dyer
City Greenwood **County** JOHNSON **State** IN
Organization (optional) ICCA
E-Mail Address mikecdyer@gmail.com

Comments The continuous taking of a public resource that leads to the inevitable death and destruction of a species that is exploited for profit should be illegal. I hope we can work on making that happen. No words can describe my disgust and frustration.

Just not trophy catfish either. Any species of fish except carp a paylake should have to buy from a fishery. They should have proof where they bought it and log what is caught and dies. Winnings should be reported to state for tax purposes. I just can't believe they get away with this.

Comment Received 8/24/2015 2:58:50 PM

Commenter Name terry jackson
City rising sun **County** OHIO **State** indiana
E-Mail Address jrabe7@embarqmail.com

Comments I'm for the reg.'s on the Ohio river, and against commercial fisherman of selling big catfish to paylakes .

Comment Received 8/24/2015 2:59:20 PM

Commenter Name Randall McDaniel
City Maceo **County** DAVIESS **State** Kentucky
E-Mail Address randall.mcdaniel22@yahoo.com

Comments I LIVE IN THE STATE OF KENTUCKY AND WE NEED TOUGHER LAWS FOR THE OHIO RIVER. I HAVE WAS BORN AND RAISED HERE AND HAVE WATCHED THE CATFISH POPULATION DECLINE. THE COMMERCIAL FISHING HAS CHANGED TO TARGETING TROPHY CATFISH AND I THINK THE LAWS SHOULD CHANGE AS WELL. ONE FISH PER DAY IS ALOT OF TROPHY FISH BEING TAKEN FROM OUR BELOVED RIVER TO BE TAKEN TO A POND.THAT IS NO LIFE FOR A LARGE FISH.I MOST LIKELY WILL NEVER SEE THE TROPHY POPULATION BACK TO WHERE IT WAS SEVEN OR EIGHT YEARS AGO. THIS IS A WASTE OF KENTUCKY AND INDIANA RESOURCES. I HOPE YOU PASS SOME LAWS THAT KENTUCKYS FISH AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT WAS AFRAID TO DO. HOW DO YOU GRANDFATHER IN FISHERMEN TO ALLOW THEM TO KEEP MORE FISH. THERE IS ALOT I DONT UNDERSTAND BUT I AM VERY CONCERNED OVER THE CATFISH AS WELL AS OTHER ANIMALS.

Comment Received 8/24/2015 3:53:16 PM

<p>Commenter Name Chad Waugh City Kendallville County NOBLE State Indiana Organization (optional) Extreme Catfishing Tournament Trail E-Mail Address catdaddychad@yahoo.com Comments I am for the rule change. Something needs to be done. The numbers of trophy size catfish in the Ohio River has been diminished drastically. As a tournament angler and president of the Extreme Catfishing Tournament Trail, I have seen the decline in big fish over the past few years. Commercial fishermen have decimated the population of trophy catfish to sell them to paylakes. Please stop the raping of our rivers. Comment Received 8/24/2015 4:00:10 PM</p>
<p>Commenter Name Bryan Meharry City West Lafayette County TIPPECANOE State IN Organization (optional) ICCA E-Mail Address cptainv@yahoo.com Comments These rule changes must be made at this time. It is time to put the interests of the fish and the thousands of recreational fisherman ahead of a few commercial fishermen. Taking of large numbers if near record size catfish from our States rivers and lakes for the personal profit of a very few commercial fishermen is not sustainable. They are fueling a pay lake business model that has changed from farm raised catfish to river fish of great size that must be replenished regularly do to high mortality rates. Please make the proposed rule changes as soon as possible. Please revisit this issue regularly. Catfish deserve recognition as a game fish. I certainly hope to be able to comment again in the future on further protecting this great resource we are lucky to have here in Indiana. Regards, Bryan A. Meharry Comment Received 8/24/2015 4:57:19 PM</p>
<p>Commenter Name Loretta demler City Carmel County HAMILTON State Indiana E-Mail Address Ameythest59@yahoo.com Comments I support the catfish rule Comment Received 8/24/2015 5:06:36 PM</p>
<p>Commenter Name Randy Seger City Jasper County DUBOIS State Indiana E-Mail Address rjsseger@frontier.com Comments I oppose the rule concerning lenth and size limit on the catfish on interior rivers in Indiana. I think the river system within Indiana should be considered on it's own merits without the influence of the state bordering Indiana on the rivers adjoining the other states. I fish the East Fork of the White River and do not see any loss of catfish on size nor numbers in the last 25 years. I think the changes should no affect the interior rivers and I am opposed to the length and number limits. Comment Received 8/24/2015 10:35:53 PM</p>
<p>Commenter Name Matt Burlingame City North Manchester County WABASH State Indiana</p>

Organization (optional) Indiana Catfish Conservation Association

E-Mail Address mnburlingame@frontier.com

Comments It was stated at the hearing this evening that a study from Eastern Illinois University showed that catfish populations were increasing despite commercial fishing and there are no other studies that can contradict it. In 2005, Robert Columbo published the results of a large study on the Wabash comparing catfish populations between commercially fish and non-commercially fished sections of the river. This 2005 study does show the detrimental affects of commercial fishing on catfish populations. With the exception of condition and growth rates -- which were slightly better in commercially fish sections because commercial harvest reduced the density of catfish causing less interspecific competition -- all other measurements show catfish populations were better in the noncommercial sections. Below are some excerpts from the Executive Summary of Columbo et. al. 2005

"The density of the largest channel catfish was lower in the commercially fished reaches compared to the unfished reach (Chapter 1). However, no difference in the density of the small young channel catfish occurred among the river reaches. Length frequency distributions differed among reaches, with the unfished reach having the highest mean length among treatment reaches. These differences were reflected in the stock indices. The PSD and RSD-P indices were higher in the non-commercially fished reach (NON) compared to both the IN & IL and the IN treatment reaches which were both commercially fished. Potentially, more abundant large fish in the NON treatment reach reduced individual body size due to intraspecific competition. Similarly, condition of channel catfish was lower in the NON treatment reach where the density of large individuals was high.

The proportion of old channel catfish in the commercially exploited reaches was low compared to the NON reach (Chapter 2). Both electrofishing and hoop netting revealed higher mortality rates in the commercially fished reaches. Judging by the higher mortality in the IN & IL treatment reach than in the IN one, harvest is likely greatest in this reach shared by Indiana and Illinois. Overall, compared to the Upper Mississippi River population of channel catfish, the mortality in all treatment reaches of the Wabash River was fairly low and growth rates were high. Increased mortality and reduced density in the commercial fishing reaches apparently enhanced individual growth rates in these reaches. Reduced intraspecific competition, a compensatory population response, likely was responsible. Aging of channel catfish indicated recruitment in every year, although the 1993 and 2000 year classes were relatively weak."

" To understand how management strategies affect size-dependent population yield, mean length of channel catfish harvested, and spawning potential ratio (SPR), we modeled the population using the Beverton-Holt yield-per-recruit model, exploring the potential effects of 10, 13, and 15 inch minimum length limits. At the current level of harvest and size limits, harvest of channel catfish appears to be sustainable. The model suggested that if both Indiana and Illinois adopted a 10-inch minimum length requirement for sport and commercial fishing, recruitment and growth overfishing may occur with even a moderate increase in harvest. If a 13-inch minimum length limit was implemented by both states, a larger range of harvest and a greater mean length could be sustained before the population became overfished. At this length limit, maximum yield would increase by about 10%, while producing larger catfish for the sport fishery. At the modeled 15-inch minimum length limit, recruitment overfishing was not reached at any of the conditional fishing mortalities and harvestable mean lengths were the greatest.

With the current minimum length limits occurring in the Wabash River, total yield would decline with modest increases in harvest rates. As such, all harvested reaches require monitoring so that overharvest of reproductively viable adults does not occur. It is important to note that all of these modeling scenarios do not incorporate compensatory responses (e.g., dynamic changes in recruitment and growth rates) as a function of changes in density. Our comparison across reaches suggests that demographic parameters are highly responsive to density changes, which may alter modeling responses. Further, the current modeling scenario assumes equal harvest probability of all individuals above the minimum length limit, although it is likely that intermediate-size “fiddler” catfish may be selectively removed by commercial fishers. More detailed information about size-dependent harvest rates would improve model predictions."

The Indiana Catfish Conservation Association supports the regulation changes! These species need to be protected for the integrity of our aquatic ecosystems and the enjoyment of all future Indiana anglers.

Comment Received 8/24/2015 10:36:02 PM



INDIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

COMMON SENSE CONSERVATION SINCE 1938

August 21, 2015

Comments to Natural Resources Commission Public Hearing August 24, 2015

LSA Document #14-510: Proposed Rules for catfish, both commercial and sport taking, amendment to 312 IAC 9-7-3 governing catfish, amendment to 312 IAC 9-7-16 governing sport fishing on the Ohio River, amendment to 312 IAC 9-8-2 governing commercial fishing for catfish except on the Ohio River, amendment to 312 IAC 9-8-6 governing commercial fishing for catfish on the Ohio River.

The Indiana Wildlife Federation supports the proposed rules establishing a minimum size limit of 13 inches for channel, blue, and flathead catfish; and the bag limit of one catfish over 35 inches per day.

Additional comments:

1. We support the increase in the minimum size limit from 10 inches to 13 inches to increase spawning success but believe it does not go far enough to protect breeding populations. As reported to the commission during preliminary adoption hearings, catfish reproductive size is approximately 15 inches. A 15 inch limit should be considered in the future if needed.
2. We request consideration of a bag limit on the total number of fish harvested per day, in addition to the limit of one over 35 inches. Currently there are no limits. Also, we request commercial fishermen be required to report numbers of fish caught, in addition to pounds of fish. The data are important to help manage the resource.
3. Fee reasonableness and equity between sport and commercial fishing should be addressed. Fees should be set to cover the cost of administration, and should be set by one body. Currently commercial fees are set by the legislature and sport fees set by the NRC. These two duties should be combined under the NRC.
4. Specifically to commercial fishing fees, as long as Indiana continues to allow commercial fishing for catfish, and the selling of live fish, the fees should more realistically reflect the value that is being taken from the public trust. The commercial fishing business is profiting from a wildlife resource that is managed and maintained largely by sportsmen women fees and the associated federal grants for the benefit of the public. An example is the per-net cost of \$4 for commercial fishing compared to the \$17 sport fishing license fee.
5. Overall, we are concerned about the commercialization of wildlife. Catfish, and other wildlife, are in fact owned by the public for the benefit of all. The commercial taking of catfish in unlimited quantities for sale and profit violates this key tenet of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

In closing, these proposed rule changes are a good first step to addressing the growing concern of many conservationists regarding the commercialization of wildlife, and how well our Indiana natural resources are or are not being properly managed and protected for future generations.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Simpson
Conservation Policy Director

RE: AM
W. CLARIFY: ASSURE 1 CATFISH > 35" NON OHIO RIVER
REGARLESS OF WHETHER THE COMMERCIAL
FISHERMAN IS LICENSED IN BOTH KY & IN.
THE TAKE LIMIT IS PER DAY, NOT PER LICENSE.

708 East Michigan Street • Indianapolis, IN 46077 • (317) 875-9453 • (800) 347-3445
www.indianawildlife.org

EXHIBIT C

Division of Fish and Wildlife Response

The Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) commenced studying the decline in the catfish harvest in 2009 following the Natural Resources Commission Comprehensive Rule Review Project. At that time, a number of citizens and conservation organizations proposed increased protection for the catfish, citing concerns about potential commercial overharvest of big catfish for sale to pay lake operators. The DNR is required by state law in IC 14-22-2-3 to provide for the protection, reproduction, care, management, survival, and regulation of wild animal populations, which includes catfish.

At the completion of its five year study, the Division has concluded that the decline in catfish harvested can be attributed to a number of factors, including:

- Increased sport fishing interest in catfish, both for consumptive harvest and for a growing number of catfish catch-and-release tournaments;
- Increased commercial harvest above the long-term annual average, including the targeting of the largest catfish available for live sale to pay lakes;
- First-hand observations and anecdotal information from fishermen over a period of years that suggest the number and size of catfish appears to be declining, at least in some heavily fished locations;
- Unquantified but likely negative impacts on catfish from growing abundance of Asian carp as well as impacts of other exotic invasive species such as zebra mussels;
- Periodic water quality issues, most notably from non-point source pollution affecting Indiana's rivers;
- Knowledge that current 10-inch minimum size limit does not protect catfish to reproductive size, which is closer to 15 inches;
- Research findings that document catfish are more heavily exploited in the commercially fished zones of the Wabash River.

Research by Robert Colombo as a research assistant at Southern Illinois University (now a professor at Eastern Illinois University) concluded in 2005 that with the current regulations, only a modest increase in harvest could cause overfishing of catfish on the Wabash River. In particular, with the current 10-inch minimum size limit in Indiana's portion of the Wabash River, the spawning potential ratio dropped below the 0.20 threshold at a fishing mortality of 33 percent, which means recruitment overfishing will occur if harvest exceeds 33 percent. This ongoing research suggests that flathead catfish are currently experiencing about 30 percent fishing mortality. Dr. Colombo noted that increasing the minimum size limits to 13 inches would lead to increased population abundance and higher angler catch rates and yield because it increases the reproductive potential of smaller/younger fish.

Recreational harvest estimates were not available when Colombo authored his report, but the 2005-2006 Wabash River creel survey indicated that around 70 percent of all catfish caught recreationally are harvested. Catch-and-release fishing was minimal, but did increase farther upstream. The 2009 report by Steve Donabauer reported that the current 10-inch minimum size limit allows harvest of immature fish and thus provides very limited protection for first time spawning catfish. Flathead catfish become sexually mature between 3-5 years and channel catfish at 4-5 years, yet flathead catfish are already nearly 12 inches long by age three and channel catfish are nearly 12 inches by age four. Therefore, thirteen (13) inches is the minimum size needed in order to help ensure self-sustaining catfish populations in Indiana's rivers and streams. Donabauer also showed larger, older fish and lower annual mortality and exploitation rates in the non-commercially fished section of the Wabash River.

The larger, “trophy” catfish have a higher reproductive potential, and hence the ability to produce more offspring. Additionally, because large catfish eat smaller fish, large “trophy” catfish can help control the populations of forage species such as gizzard shad and Asian carp. Maintaining strong predator fish populations, such as large catfish, can potentially offer some biological control of invasive species such as Asian carp. Research conducted out of Western Illinois University found that blue catfish in a Mississippi River backwater impoundment fed heavily on adult Asian carp.

Indiana is not the only state in the Midwest that has studied the decline in catfish harvest and concluded that changes are needed in order to protect the species with the best reproductive potential:

- The Kentucky Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Resources now has similar catfish changes on the Ohio River and its tributaries for large, “trophy” catfish by limiting the take of blue and flathead catfish greater than 35” to 1 per day and channel catfish greater than 28” to 1 per day, with the exception of commercial fishing downstream of the Cannelton Lock and Dam near Tell City in Perry County; this exception in Kentucky’s regulations allow commercial fishermen who have harvested more than 10,000 pounds of catfish in at least two of the last three years and others selected by a drawing (for a total of 50) to take up to four of these large catfish (in aggregate) per day. Kentucky does not have a minimum size limit for catfish harvested on the Ohio River.
- Illinois DNR recently implemented the same “trophy” catfish regulations as those proposed in this rule package for sport fishing and the same regulations are currently proposed for commercial fishing on the Wabash River (limit of 1 channel catfish over 28 inches and 1 blue and flathead catfish over 35 inches). Illinois DNR is proposing a 13-inch minimum size for catfish for both commercial and recreational fishers; they currently have a 15-inch minimum size limit for commercial fisherman, but no minimum size limit or bag limit for recreational anglers.
- Ohio allows only one big catfish (over 35 inches for blues and flatheads, 28 inches for channels) per day. Only five catfish can be taken per day, all catfish species combined.
- West Virginia allows only two blue catfish to be taken per day, and they do not allow commercial fishing.
- Virginia allows one blue catfish over 34 inches per day.
- Tennessee allows one catfish over 34 inches per day with a daily bag limit of five for all catfish harvested.
- Minnesota allows two flatheads to be taken per day and only one over 24 inches. They don’t allow commercial fishing in the Minnesota River.
- Mississippi allows one blue or flathead catfish over 34 inches per day.
- Oklahoma allows one blue catfish over 30 inches per day, and flatheads must be at least 20 inches.

Harvest reports from commercial fishermen show an increasing focus on larger, “trophy” catfish. From 2005 to 2012, the average annual catfish harvest reported by Ohio River commercial fishermen was a total of 16,091 pounds. In 2014, annual catfish harvest increased to a total of 35,900 pounds. The number of large “trophy” catfish harvested has increased from 161 in 2012 to 608 in 2014, the majority of which were harvested by only two commercial fishermen. Based on reports from the 17 licensed commercial fishermen on the Ohio River in 2014, flathead catfish comprised 10% of the total harvest, while channel catfish comprised 7% and blue catfish 8% of the total harvest. It is worth noting that these values are only harvest that is reported to the DFW by the commercial fishermen, and may not be completely accurate.

Over the last 10 years, there has been an average of 340 licensed individuals that annually conduct commercial fishing on inland waters (which includes the Wabash River boundary waters, the Wabash up to the city of Lafayette, and select portions of the White River and Patoka River), and most of them are

simply recreational anglers that use commercial fishing gear to take catfish and other species for personal use (food for relatives and friends) and for local fish fry events. For inland water, the 2005 to 2012 average reported commercial catfish harvest was a total of 73,965 pounds. During 2013 and 2014, reported commercial catfish harvest on inland water was a total of 87,105 and 75,911 pounds, respectively. Catfish comprised 70% of the total harvest in 2014 on inland waters. The retail value for catfish sold by commercial anglers as fillets is estimated at \$4.00 /lb. and \$2.50/lb. if the catfish is 10 lbs. or more.

Catfish harvest will fluctuate on an annual basis due to changes in river conditions (temperature and water level) and the natural catfish population variability within riverine systems. Also, these numbers do not include catfish that have been harvested by sport anglers, who as noted are not required to report. The 2005-2006 creel survey on the Wabash River estimated that sport anglers harvest over 180,000 pounds of catfish in a given year.

Indiana's Conservation Officers can, and do, enforce the size and bag limits for anglers, including commercial fishermen. Enforcement of a violation of these rules change can vary from a warning to a civil penalty, ticket, a fine, or possible jail time. Under state law, a violation of the size or bag limit can be an infraction or a misdemeanor, depending on the situation.

A comment was received about the catfish harvested by anglers on trips with licensed fishing guides. Based on reports received by licensed fishing guides, there are very few catfish harvested by their customers. In 2014, less than 10 catfish were reported harvested by customers on trips with fishing guides.

In conclusion, it is important to note that both commercial fishing license holders will still be able to take an unlimited number of blue and flathead catfish over 13 inches and under 35 inches and channel catfish over 13 inches and under 28 inches each day, allowing commercial anglers to still take catfish that are needed for personal consumption and sale. Commercial anglers will still be allowed to harvest catfish (within the size limits) from public waters and sell live fish to pay lakes as well as sell/keep the fillets for human consumption. Sport fishing license holders will still be able to take an unlimited number of blue and flathead catfish over 13 inches and under 35 inches and channel catfish over 13 inches and under 28 inches each day from rivers and streams (there is a daily bag limit of 10 in aggregate and no minimum size requirement for catfish taken from lakes and reservoirs).

By limiting the number of large (trophy) catfish that can be taken by anglers and establishing a minimum size of 13" on rivers and streams statewide, catfish will be able to increase recruitment (survival of younger catfish), and ensure continued trophy catfish angling opportunities and harvest for both sport and commercial fishermen.

EXHIBIT D

TITLE 312 NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Final Rule

LSA Document #14-510

DIGEST

Amends 312 IAC 9-7-3 governing catfish. Amends 312 IAC 9-7-16 governing sport fishing on the Ohio River. Amends 312 IAC 9-8-2 governing commercial fishing for catfish except on the Ohio River. Amends 312 IAC 9-8-6 governing commercial fishing for catfish on the Ohio River. Effective 30 days after filing with the Publisher.

IC 4-22-2.1-5 Statement Concerning Rules Affecting Small Businesses

312 IAC 9-7-3; 312 IAC 9-7-16; 312 IAC 9-8-2; 312 IAC 9-8-6

SECTION 1. 312 IAC 9-7-3 IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

312 IAC 9-7-3 Catfish

Authority: IC 14-10-2-4; IC 14-22-2-6

Affected: IC 14-22

Sec. 3. (a) An individual must not take or possess a channel catfish, blue catfish, or flathead catfish from a river or stream unless the catfish is at least ~~ten (10)~~ **thirteen (13)** inches long. **Except as otherwise provided in subsection (d)**, an individual may take or possess an unlimited number of channel catfish, blue catfish, or flathead catfish from a river or stream.

(b) Except as otherwise provided in ~~subsection~~ **subsections (c) and (d)**, an individual may take or possess not more than ten (10) catfish in aggregate of any size from a lake or reservoir per day.

(c) Notwithstanding subsection (b), an individual may take channel catfish from Turtle Creek Reservoir (Sullivan County) without regard to a bag limit.

(d) Notwithstanding subsections (a) through (c), an individual may take no more than one (1) each per day of a:

(1) channel catfish that is at least twenty-eight (28) inches long;

(2) blue catfish that is at least thirty-five (35) inches long; and

(3) flathead catfish that is at least thirty-five (35) inches longer;

from a river, stream, lake, or reservoir. *(Natural Resources Commission; 312 IAC 9-7-3; filed May 12, 1997, 10:00 a.m.: 20 IR 2718; filed May 28, 1998, 5:14 p.m.: 21 IR 3721; filed Dec 26, 2001, 2:40 p.m.: 25 IR 1539; readopted filed Jul 28, 2003, 12:00 p.m.: 27 IR 286; readopted filed Nov 24, 2008, 11:08 a.m.: 20081210-IR-312080672RFA; filed Jul 6, 2010, 1:55 p.m.:*

20100804-IR-312090616FRA; filed Mar 15, 2013, 2:33 p.m.: 20130410-IR-312120403FRA; readopted filed May 20, 2014, 9:43 a.m.: 20140618-IR-312140017RFA)

SECTION 2. 312 IAC 9-7-16 IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

312 IAC 9-7-16 Sport fishing on the Ohio River

Authority: IC 14-10-2-4; IC 14-22-2-6

Affected: IC 14-22

Sec. 16. (a) This section governs fishing on the Ohio River, excluding all bays and tributaries.

(b) An individual must not take ~~sport~~ fish except by any of the following:

(1) Fishing pole or hand line.

(2) Float fishing.

(3) Setlines:

(A) attached to:

(i) a tree limb;

(ii) a tree trunk;

(iii) a bank pole; or

(iv) the bank itself; and

(B) each bearing one (1) single or multibarbed hook.

(4) Not more than two (2) trotlines per individual. Each trotline shall have not more than fifty (50) single or multibarbed baited hooks placed not closer together than eighteen (18) inches. All trotlines must be tended at least once every twenty-four (24) hours.

(c) An individual may take an exempted species of fish as defined in 312 IAC 9-6-10, by the methods prescribed in subsection (b) or according to the following methods:

(1) Long bow, including compound bow, or crossbow with an arrow having one (1) or more barbs and a line attached. An exempted species of fish without scales shall not be taken with bow and arrow or crossbow during nighttime hours (from one-half (1/2) hour after sunset until one-half (1/2) hour before sunrise).

(2) Giggling from February 1 through May 10 with any pronged or barbed instrument attached to the end of a rigid object. A person must not take fish by giggling from a boat or platform.

(d) An individual must not take fish under this section by means of a hook dragged or jerked through the water with the intent to snag fish on contact.

(e) An individual must not take fish within two hundred (200) yards below any dam on the Ohio River except by fishing pole or hand line.

(f) An individual must not take minnows from the Ohio River except by:

(1) a minnow trap not to exceed three (3) feet long and eighteen (18) inches in diameter nor having a throat opening greater than one (1) inch in diameter;

(2) a dip net not to exceed three (3) feet in diameter;

- (3) a minnow seine not to exceed thirty (30) feet long and six (6) feet deep nor having mesh size larger than one-fourth (1/4) inch bar mesh;
- (4) a cast net; or
- (5) lawful fishing methods provided in this section.

(g) An individual may take fish in the Ohio River only by sport fishing methods authorized under this section as follows:

	Daily Bag	Possessio n Limit	Size (Inches)
Bass (largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted)	6	12	12 (except no size limit on spotted bass)
Bass (white, yellow, striped, and hybrids)	30	60	Not more than 4 fish can be 15 or longer
Rock bass	15	30	none
Walleye, sauger, and saugeye	10	20	none
Muskellunge and tiger muskellunge	2	2	30
Crappie	30	60	none
Catfish (blue, channel, and flathead)	none	none	13

(h) An individual may, by means of a fish spear, gig, spear gun, bowfishing equipment, crossbow, or underwater spear, take an Asian carp, sucker, carp, gar, bowfin, buffalo, or shad.

(i) Notwithstanding subsection (g), an individual may take no more than one (1) each per day of a:

- (1) channel catfish that is at least twenty-eight (28) inches long;**
- (2) blue catfish that is at least thirty-five (35) inches long; and**
- (3) flathead catfish that is at least thirty-five (35) inches longer;**

(Natural Resources Commission; 312 IAC 9-7-16; filed May 12, 1997, 10:00 a.m.: 20 IR 2720; errata filed Nov 24, 1997, 4:30 p.m.: 21 IR 1347; readopted filed Jul 28, 2003, 12:00 p.m.: 27 IR 286; readopted filed Nov 24, 2008, 11:08 a.m.: 20081210-IR-312080672RFA; filed Aug 28, 2009, 3:39 p.m.: 20090923-IR- 312080886FRA; filed Jul 6, 2010, 1:55 p.m.: 20100804-IR-312090616FRA; filed Feb 22, 2011, 1:13 p.m.: 20110323-IR-312100501FRA; filed Mar 15, 2013, 2:33 p.m.: 20130410-IR-312120403FRA; readopted filed May 20, 2014, 9:43 a.m.: 20140618-IR-312140017RFA)

SECTION 3. 312 IAC 9-8-2 IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

312 IAC 9-8-2 Commercial fishing except on the Ohio River; general provisions

Authority: IC 14-10-2-4; IC 14-22-2-6

Affected: IC 14-22-13; IC 14-22-14

Sec. 2. (a) This section applies to license holders engaged in commercial fishing on inland water.

(b) For purposes of this section, "license holder" means an individual licensed under IC 14-22-13 to use in, and to possess for use in, the water, seines, nets, or other commercial fishing gear authorized in this rule.

(c) A license holder may take or sell fish with a commercial fishing license issued under this rule and 312 IAC 9-6-11. A license holder may take fish with the aid of illumination of:

- (1) a spotlight;
- (2) a searchlight; or
- (3) an artificial light;

where lawfully engaged in commercial fishing.

(d) A license holder subject to this rule must not possess trout or salmon.

(e) A license holder must not possess or sell any of the following taken from the waters described in subsection (a):

- (1) Chubs.
- (2) Northern pike.
- (3) Chain pickerel.
- (4) Muskellunge.
- (5) Tiger muskellunge.
- (6) White bass.
- (7) Yellow bass.
- (8) Striped bass.
- (9) Hybrid striped bass.
- (10) Walleye.
- (11) Sauger.
- (12) Saugeye.
- (13) Smallmouth bass.
- (14) Largemouth bass.
- (15) Spotted bass.
- (16) Bluegill.
- (17) Redear sunfish.
- (18) Rock bass.
- (19) Crappie.
- (20) American eel.
- (21) Paddlefish.
- (22) Lake sturgeon.
- (23) Lake herring.
- (24) Blue catfish less than ~~ten (10)~~ **thirteen (13)** inches long.
- (25) Channel catfish less than ~~ten (10)~~ **thirteen (13)** inches long.
- (26) Flathead catfish less than ~~ten (10)~~ **thirteen (13)** inches long.
- (27) Lake whitefish less than eighteen (18) inches long.
- (28) Yellow perch.

(f) A license holder may take and sell shovelnose sturgeon that are at least twenty-five (25) inches measured in accordance with 312 IAC 9-6-2(b) only from October 1 through May 31 and only with a valid inland water roe harvester's license.

(g) A license holder may take no more than one (1) each per day of a:

- (1) channel catfish that is at least twenty-eight (28) inches long;**
- (2) blue catfish that is at least thirty-five (35) inches long; and**
- (3) flathead catfish that is at least thirty-five (35) inches longer;**

~~(g)~~ **(h)** A license holder must report fish catches as follows:

(1) A license holder under this section shall keep accurate daily records on a departmental form of the following:

- (A) The pounds and species of fish caught.
- (B) The number of pieces of each type of gear fished by date.
- (C) The county fished.

The license holder shall submit the completed form to the division by the fifteenth day of each month for the preceding month whether the license holder fished or not unless the license holder has submitted an inactive license form to signify that no commercial fishing will take place on inland water for the remainder of the calendar year. The inactive license form shall be submitted to the division of fish and wildlife before the fifteenth day of the month following the month the license is deemed inactive. The license holder shall allow onboard and dockside inspections of the gear and catch at any time by a conservation officer or other authorized representative of the department.

(2) A license holder for Lake Michigan must comply with the reporting requirements of IC 14-22-14-23 and section 3(h) of this rule.

(Natural Resources Commission; 312 IAC 9-8-2; filed May 12, 1997, 10:00 a.m.: 20 IR 2721; filed May 28, 1998, 5:14 p.m.: 21 IR 3724; readopted filed Jul 28, 2003, 12:00 p.m.: 27 IR 286; filed Feb 27, 2007, 2:25 p.m.: 20070328-IR-312060262FRA; readopted filed Nov 24, 2008, 11:08 a.m.: 20081210-IR-312080672RFA; filed Jul 6, 2010, 1:55 p.m.: 20100804-IR-312090616FRA; filed Jan 2, 2013, 3:42 p.m.: 20130130-IR-312120381FRA; readopted filed May 20, 2014, 9:43 a.m.: 20140618-IR-312140017RFA)

SECTION 4. 312 IAC 9-8-6 IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

312 IAC 9-8-6 Commercial fishing on the Ohio River

Authority: IC 14-10-2-4; IC 14-22-2-6

Affected: IC 14-22-13

Sec. 6. (a) This section applies to license holders engaged in commercial fishing on the Ohio River as authorized under IC 14-22-13.

(b) "License holder" means an individual licensed under IC 14-22-13 to use in, and to possess for use in, the water:

- (1) seines;
- (2) nets; or
- (3) other commercial fishing gear.

(c) A license holder shall not take or sell fish except in accordance with IC 14-22-13, this section, and 312 IAC 9-10. A license holder may take fish with the aid of illumination of:

- (1) a spotlight;
- (2) a searchlight; or

(3) an artificial light;
where lawfully engaged in commercial fishing.

(d) A license holder under this section may take and sell all species of fish from the Ohio River except the following:

- (1) Largemouth bass.
- (2) Smallmouth bass.
- (3) Spotted bass.
- (4) Rock bass.
- (5) White crappie.
- (6) Black crappie.
- (7) Walleye.
- (8) Sauger.
- (9) Saugeye.
- (10) Striped bass.
- (11) White bass.
- (12) Hybrid striped bass.
- (13) Yellow bass.
- (14) Muskellunge.
- (15) Northern pike.
- (16) Tiger muskellunge.
- (17) Chain pickerel.
- (18) Lake sturgeon.
- (19) Trout.
- (20) Salmon.
- (21) Blue catfish less than thirteen (13) inches long.**
- (22) Channel catfish less than thirteen (13) inches long.**
- (23) Flathead catfish less than thirteen (13) inches long.**

(e) A license holder may take and sell shovelnose sturgeon that are at least twenty-five (25) inches measured in accordance with 312 IAC 9-6-2(b) only from October 1 through May 31 and only with a valid Ohio River roe harvester's license.

(f) A license holder may take and sell paddlefish that are at least thirty-two (32) inches measured in accordance with 312 IAC 9-6-2(c) only from November 1 through April 30 and only with a valid Ohio River roe harvester's license.

- (g) A license holder may take no more than one (1) each per day of a:**
- (1) channel catfish that is at least twenty-eight (28) inches long;**
 - (2) blue catfish that is at least thirty-five (35) inches long; and**
 - (3) flathead catfish that is at least thirty-five (35) inches longer;**

~~(g)~~ **(h)** A license holder under this section must tag each item of gear so that a conservation officer may determine if the:

- (1) gear is properly licensed; and
- (2) license holder is complying with the law.

~~(h)~~ (i) A person must not possess a seine, net, or commercial trotline except as authorized with a valid commercial fishing license for the Ohio River. This subsection does not apply to a manufacturer, retailer, or wholesale dealer who possesses gear exclusively for sale.

~~(i)~~ (j) The use of commercial fishing gear authorized under this section is limited as follows:

- (1) Commercial fishing gear cannot be used on or within fifty (50) yards of a bay or inlet of the Ohio River denoted by a line drawn from point to point across the bay or inlet.
- (2) Commercial fishing gear cannot be used within fifty (50) yards of the mouth of a stream denoted by a line drawn from point to point across a stream at its farthest most downstream location at the existing water level or ordinary high watermark, whichever is lowest.
- (3) Commercial gear, except slat traps, cannot be used in the following locations:
 - (A) John T. Myers Dam downstream to the outer lock wall and the portion of the split channel around the southern part of Wabash Island from the fixed weir dam to the first dike.
 - (B) Newburgh Dam downstream to the end of the outer lock wall.
 - (C) Cannelton Dam downstream to the end of the outer lock wall.
 - (D) McAlpine Dam downstream to the K and I railroad bridge.
 - (E) Markland Dam downstream to the end of the outer lock wall.

~~(j)~~ (k) The license holder must tend each item of fishing gear not less frequently than once every twenty-four (24) hours and all fish taken by the gear removed, except that baited hoop nets or slat traps may be left unattended for not more than seventy-two (72) hours. Each item of gear must be removed immediately upon the completion of fishing.

~~(k)~~ (l) Gear is authorized only as set forth as follows:

- (1) Lines and mesh must be made of:
 - (A) linen;
 - (B) cotton; or
 - (C) a flexible synthetic fiber.
- (2) The following restrictions apply to a hoop net, wing net, straight lead net, or heart lead net:
 - (A) Each net described in this subdivision must have a minimum bar mesh size of one (1) inch.
 - (B) Hoops may be any size, shape, or material.
 - (C) The maximum length of the lead or wing is sixty (60) feet.
 - (D) One (1) tag must be attached to the front hoop of each net.
- (3) The following restrictions apply to a gill or trammel net:
 - (A) The minimum bar mesh size that can be fished from November 1 through April 30 is four (4) inches.
 - (B) The only bar mesh size that can be fished from May 1 through October 31 is from four (4) inches to four and one-half (4 1/2) inches.
 - (C) The nets referenced in this subdivision may be fished weighted or as a flag net.

- (D) At least one (1) tag must be attached to the net for each one hundred (100) feet of net or part thereof.
- (4) The following restrictions apply to a commercial trotline:
 - (A) Each line must have more than fifty (50) hooks placed not closer than eighteen (18) inches apart.
 - (B) One (1) tag must be attached.
 - (C) The trotline must be:
 - (i) not longer than three thousand (3,000) feet, including staging; and
 - (ii) fished separately rather than tied in a continuous line.
- (5) The following restrictions apply to a seine:
 - (A) A seine must have the following:
 - (i) A minimum bar mesh size of one (1) inch.
 - (ii) Both float and lead lines.
 - (iii) Wood, fiberglass, metal poles, or brails attached to each end.
 - (B) A seine in the water must be attended by individuals pulling the seine through the water for the entrapment of fish.
 - (C) A seine must have at least one (1) tag attached for each one hundred (100) feet of net or part thereof.
- (6) The following restrictions apply to a slat trap basket:
 - (A) No wire or other mesh may be added to the trap.
 - (B) At least two (2) openings not less than one and one-fourth (1 1/4) inches wide must be located between the slats. These openings shall not be restricted by cross-bracings shorter than eight (8) inches long.
 - (C) The trap shall be not larger than two (2) feet in diameter or square end measure.
 - (D) A tag must be attached to the open ring or square.

⊕ (m) A license holder must do the following:

- (1) Keep accurate daily catch records on a departmental form of the following:
 - (A) The pounds and species of fish caught by gear type.
 - (B) The number of paddlefish and shovelnose sturgeon caught by gear type.
 - (C) The pounds of paddlefish, shovelnose sturgeon, sucker, and eggs sold.
 - (D) The location fished by pool, river mile, and county.
- (2) Submit to the department the completed form required under subdivision (1) by the fifteenth day of each month for the preceding month whether the license holder fished or not unless the license holder has submitted an inactive license form to signify that no commercial fishing on the Ohio River will take place for the remainder of the calendar year. The inactive license form shall be submitted to the division of fish and wildlife before the fifteenth day of the month following the month the license is deemed inactive.
- (3) Allow on-board and dockside inspection of the gear and catch at any time by a conservation officer or other authorized representative of the department.

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